



## **PURE Briefing Paper No. 18**

### **Continuing Participation in PURE - Options for 2011**

*Professor Chris Duke, Academic Director, PURE - August 2010*

***This paper is for consideration by PURE participants and colleagues prior to discussions with each PURE 'region' on the alternatives for future development.***

*Following the major PURE review and planning workshop of June 2010, this Briefing Paper (A) sets out the work planned to the end of 2010, centring on an interim Final Report scheduled to be presented at Gaborone in Botswana in December 2010; and discusses possibilities for the first PURE Regions to continue taking part in the Project, remain in the Network and to focus their involvement on like targets and challenges with colleagues in other PURE 'regions' through 2011. It then (B) reviews developments, summarises findings in the interim report to the workshop in Ostersund and collates discussion points from that workshop.*

*The PURE core team invite our colleagues in the PURE 'regions' to consider what they have gained from involvement in the project and to enter into discussion with the PURE team on how these gains could be further shaped to assist attainment of organisational and institutional objectives.*

*Shortly, PURE core team representatives will be in touch with each 'region' to discuss and agree the reports which will summarise the region's outcomes from the Project and to shape the working relationship which may take the region's choice of these outcomes further. Future arrangements for PURE work in participating regions will vary according to their different circumstances. Our aim is to agree and arrange, by October 2010, which PURE 1<sup>st</sup> cohort Regions will remain in PURE in 2011, along with other Regions now part way through the project, and new regions that may join in 2011.*

The Briefing Paper is arranged as follows:

#### **A. Involvement in PURE after 2010**

- A.1 Arrangements for September-December 2010
- A.2 Options for continuing work with PURE in 2011
- A.3 Prospects after 2011

#### **B. Review and reflections from the Ostersund Workshop**

- B.1 Executive summary and recommendations of Report for Ostersund
- B.2 Additional points from the Ostersund Workshop
- B.3 Factors influencing future developments

## **A. Involvement in PURE after 2010**

### **A.1 Arrangements for September-December 2010**

Pascal and PURE Regions agreed to actions as set out in BP1 and in each contract. We will ensure that these requirements are met by the end of 2010.

Pascal will support regions to continue their work in line with their own priorities and informed by the Ostersund discussions, with a Pascal support person for each region.

From September the redesigned and enhanced Website will be in use, enabling PURE Clusters to work effectively and giving all regions access to each area.

Regions and universities will be encouraged to continue benchmarking. A small benchmarking group will synthesise this work and prepare a report by the end of the year.

In September, each Region will be contacted. If they are able to remain in PURE in 2011, a customised agreement will be made.

In September-November Pascal will prepare brief reports for each region. These will summarise its conclusions and advice, suggesting future developments. The Pascal regional adviser (usually the CDG leader) and the PURE Academic Director will share this responsibility, liaising with the Region Link Person in each case.

By November each region will be invited to prepare a short update Action Plan for 2011-12, whether or not it can continue in active PURE membership. If appropriate this will be mounted on the PURE Website.

Later-running regions will continue on schedule, with their second CDG visits in the last quarter of the year and early in 2011. The newly joining PURE 'region' in Greece will receive its first CDG visit during this time.

In November an interim final report will be prepared and printed for the Gabarone Conference. This will be sent electronically to PURE participating regions, whether or not they are able to be in Botswana, together with the separate report for that region individually.

In November, final arrangements will be mailed for the December Gabarone Conference, which includes a half-day on PURE and its relevance to regions in Africa.

### **A.2 Options for continuing work with PURE in 2011**

Part B of this paper shows that much was achieved in the first 18 months of the PURE project. Inevitably it is case of unfinished business for most regions. PURE objectives need a much longer time frame to fulfil – perhaps five years rather than two.

In view of the report to Ostersund and the discussions about it, and about activities and progress so far, Pascal proposes to offer all regions completing this December customised options for remaining with the Project through 2011.

The level and form of continuing participation will vary from region to region. Each started at a different point, and has different needs and limits on what it can do.

Regional Link Persons are now invited to consider this paper, and to let us know whether the region wishes to continue with PURE in 2011. If the answer is yes, Pascal will explore with each region in turn its highest priorities within the time and resources available, and make an individual agreement with each region.

The same principles of utility, priority equality of treatment, recognition of regions' different circumstances, and project viability, will guide agreements. We will try very hard to complete this during October.

Things that regions opt for could range across a wide spectrum.

Some may want help to run a dissemination event in the region on PURE work in the first half of 2011, drawing in relevant experience from other regions.

Some regions may just have a Pascal PURE resource person who knows the region (the CDG leader or another person if more relevant). They would have continuing Network membership and access to the Website, taking part in work conducted there, for example by the different kinds of clusters and on subjects of special interest.

Regions may wish to post Good Practice Examples from their region on the Website, exchanging experience with others based on other examples posted there.

Regions can continue their own benchmarking activities anyway, but they may prefer to take part as members of the PURE Network in order to strengthen the work and comparative learning.

Regions may choose to take part in the next PURE international workshop, scheduled to take place in Munich in May 2011, especially if they are unable to be in Botswana this December. Munich will provide an opportunity to showcase their ongoing work, as well as to learn, individually and as a region, from new work.

Some regions where the whole idea of engagement, partnership and third mission within a lifelong learning framework was quite new are only now seeing a more widely shared grasp of these ideas, and of what they mean in practice for universities and the region. Taking this forward and embedding it in practical useful work may be their next step within PURE.

Well into the project, some regions have for the first time also found practical means and channels whereby different stakeholders can meet and talk. Simply having a useful conversation is a breakthrough for some. 2011 might call for continuing involvement in PURE to build on this, develop trust, and establish sustainable arrangements.

A third visit by the same or a partly different CDG is especially attractive to some regions.

Others may prefer a different kind of visit or visits, by one or two experts in areas of high importance; or for example an ongoing developmental arrangement involving several visits, for longer than three days, during the year.

At the highest level of involvement, some regions only felt eighteen months into the project that they were clear what needed doing. They now feel ready really to make a start. This can be accommodated, as can additional regions new to the work.

Please think about these and other options, and then make contact with PURE.

Regions are invited to look through this paper, consult with others, if possible through the Regional Consultative Group, and make contact with Alan Foster ([alan.foster@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:alan.foster@glasgow.ac.uk)) with a copy to Chris Duke ([chris.duke@rmit.edu.au](mailto:chris.duke@rmit.edu.au)). It will be good to hear from you before the end of September, leaving time to discuss with each region just what is possible and best.

### **A.3 Prospects after 2011**

Because of high levels of uncertainty and rapid change in the global economic and political environment, Pascal will at this stage offer extensions of involvement within PURE for one year only. In the second half of 2011, we will together review the situation and decide what form of continuation, including new initiatives and directions, may make sense at that point.

## **B. Review and reflections from the Ostersund Workshop**

### **B.1 Executive summary and recommendations of Report for Ostersund**

#### **B.1.1 General**

##### Identifying 'sponsors'

It is important to identify, involve and gain the commitment of key decision-makers in any institution or public body, in order to make engagement effective and secure its continuation. The right kind of support proves crucial in several regions. Without it there may be excessive reliance on the efforts of one or two committed individuals. The identification and involvement of these key players is an essential part of the scoping work for new regions.

##### Building exchanges

Sustained trust-based partnership can be developed between the different stakeholders in a region and a variety of tools and approaches has proved useful in doing this. Several PURE regions have demonstrated the capacity to develop trust and build on a sense of success by means of shared practical tasks. Others are considering a variety of projects that may build sustained partnership in this way.

##### Recognising progress

All 'SMART' objectives (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic) are also 'Time-bound'. Action research initiatives, such as PURE, take time. It is not a 'one-size-fits-all' answer but a means of identifying evidence-led networking, sharing experiences and producing results. Full returns on the investments made so far in PURE come from sharing and adapting returns to local circumstances and requirements, over time. Some regions see PURE as an opportunity or an injection of pace into work they have been building trust and capacity in for some time. Several regions have made formal agreements, and will now build on the early PURE-generated conversations and contacts to deliver full value.

##### Re-evaluating learning

At least two things stand out in the shared experience of the PURE family journey so far: the significance of active involvement in interregional exchange and the practical value of the emphasis on learning for individuals and organisations. Several regions identified their enhanced understanding of what being a learning organisation and region entails, as well as recognising the importance of individuals' learning through the whole tertiary education sector (tertiary cluster report) as an integrated factor, not an isolated one.

Understanding and supporting lifelong learning outside college walls remains a huge challenge and an opportunity in many regions, but a number are approaching these challenges with real enthusiasm and imagination - whether through restructuring present resources or implementing new strategic goals such as active citizenship.

##### Package innovation

The creation of Regional Innovation Systems and Knowledge Capital Centres is a fundamental strategic initiative which will be important for the prosperity and well-being of regions. This is an example of a PURE shared high priority. The trailblazing of some regions (M) has demonstrated the value of recognising their natural, social and cultural 'capital' and how PURE can be utilised as the channel for facilitating the transmission of these experiences and outcomes. The RIR cluster gives examples of how understanding and exchange are being developed in the PURE regions.

##### Linking to small business

Given the importance of small business to any economy, large or small, there is a clear recognition, in the discussions within PURE, of the need for regions and universities to be engaged in action research activities which lead to growth in the formation and development of SMEs.

#### Linking to environmental concerns

Green technology jobs and skills are a central part of a region's regeneration policy. Within PURE there is intense commitment to and enthusiasm for green development, and discussion about the best strategy to achieve this. Ecotourism is a significant factor in a number of regions, as is also the reclamation of former industrial areas as part of a strategic plan which addresses the legacy of former heavy industrial areas and the retraining and reskilling of the population in these areas. Several PURE regions are involved in these discussions.

#### Inclusion

Several regions have a deep commitment to equity, and for practical projects for special groups including unemployed youth, immigrants, the elderly and others. These concerns are being addressed in the development of other projects through the Pascal International Observatory

#### Engagement as practice

All of these points must be considered as part of long-term strategy, not short-term adjustments. Most required cultural change embedded over time. Continuing support from colleagues and peers within PURE has proved to be heartening in terms of facing the challenges of embedding engagement in the institutions and bodies with which PURE works.

### **B.1.2 Governments and Public Authorities**

#### A stable environment

National governments need to be mindful in altering local and regional government arrangements not to destabilise their work, and not to sacrifice the social capital and identity which help sustainable regional development.

#### Devolution with trust

Stable and consistent treatment by central government, combined with trust in more local levels to decide wisely and to act competently within their jurisdictions, appear to matter more than how regions are defined, and even how large they are.

#### Valuing distinctive competences

National governments working downwards with diverse regions, as well as upwards with the EU, should redouble their efforts to draw down funds for projects which enhance regions' natural and often traditional, historical advantages and assets.

#### Sustainability

More attention is needed at European as well as national levels to sustainability following the end of time-bound development funding.

#### Mixed messages

National governments should be clear what they want, and give clear signals (including funding and reward systems where these apply) if they wish to see third mission taken seriously as a means to support regional (and so national) development.

#### Evidence-based policy

National governments should make every effort to seek an evidence base for investing in different kinds of universities, and not be unduly influenced by the image and rhetoric of 'world class' in the absence of such a base. They should balance supporting a very few 'world class' universities with a sustaining strong, development-oriented national higher education *system*.

#### Long-term considerations

Many regions seek and value balanced and sustainable development, but their funding is driven too much by narrow short-term economic measures.

#### Collaboration between universities

Funding arrangements that work to require engagement and reward collaboration between universities should be considered and used systematically.

#### Means of consultation

One means of improving engagement is for authorities to create regular councils or forums where different stakeholders including universities take part. Authorities may also invite rectors or vice-chancellors to join their key strategic planning body, locking them into planning and working for the future of the region. A mix of formal and informal means of consultation and joint endeavour is usually needed.

#### Involving the tertiary sector in regional development planning

Pascal advises all regions to encourage and support regular and systematic cooperation and shared planning between universities and other tertiary institutions in their regional engagement work, as well as involving them as a sector in regional development planning and the implementation of strategies.

### **B.1.3 University governance and management**

#### Leading 'third mission'

Universities should take a strong line at the top, to adopt and integrate a third mission. Institutional leaders must make a clear choice and direct the institution accordingly.

#### Improving university engagement

Many universities have energetic individual staff and groups dedicated to engagement and development in their regions. The report gives examples where university leaders are now giving formal support and structures are adapting. Recognition in the national policies of states with involvement in PURE would greatly assist this process and is an example where the aggregate message from PURE can be greater than the sum of the parts.

#### Governing bodies

One clear message emanating from PURE is of the need for a system of University governance which involves greater representation from external members. Some regions are now taking this message to their national governments. Universities should involve more lay members on their key governing bodies, as well as in consultative capacities throughout specialised areas of scholarship. It is recommended that governing councils be small and efficient, with lay members included in at least roughly equal numbers.

#### Partnerships

University leaders should encourage departments and groups to explore all legal means that are at their disposal for creating partnerships, both for community development broadly and specifically for commercialisation.

#### Internal arrangements

'Third mission' does not mean creating a separate bureaucratic structure alongside teaching and research. It means integrating engagement across the curriculum and through its renewal, and into the research plans and agendas of the institution. Special units with expertise may however be needed to help with this work.

## **B.2 Additional points from the Ostersund Workshop**

### **B.2.1 Context and general considerations**

Participants entered the project from different starting points and with different backgrounds. The ground covered and the point reached by mid-2010 therefore varied considerably.

Progress took different directions depending partly who was the lead partner in the region (a university, a regional authority, an intermediary) and who paid.

PURE is a network of regions. The focus is universities' 3<sup>rd</sup> mission, but time meant that little was done on universities' own management and internal dynamics. This could be addressed in a new cycle of work.

For some regions history looms large. For example international exchange is much valued by countries that were isolated from western developments, such as Finland and Hungary.

More obviously the post-colonial experience and legacy of Botswana and Lesotho is utterly different from such once-colonial countries as Australia and the USA.

At the level of participating regions also, there are different histories and senses of identity. The nature and identity of regions remains a central issue for PURE work.

There is an inbuilt tension in PURE between being a research (or 'Mode 2 knowledge production') and R&D project, and a consultative project designed to build partnership and engagement for development, contributing to better policy-making and good practice.

### **B.2.2 Benefits derived from PURE**

A significant benefit is the credibility that PURE brings to this work within the region. It provides 'a moral authority', assisting 'in-reach' and stronger internal leverage within the bodies taking part, as well external legitimation.

PURE has created new dynamics, enabling the creation of a common vision in a number of regions.

PURE has been useful for policy input as well as for stocktaking, and for seeing things in new and different ways. It enables stakeholders to work together more as partners. It mobilises energy for co-owned planning, supporting consultative developmental activity.

PURE is about moving from Knowledge to Know-how.

Concrete actions to achieve agreed important priorities are often the basis of partners' success in the PURE project. This means a pragmatic approach, focused effort, and useful local outcomes.

One key to success is synergy with current efforts and needs, adding value rather than diverting energies.

Partnership means some loss of control. Therefore trust is essential. Tangible benefits to the partners strengthen engagement, such as research useful for the region, and chairs funded by the region in the university.

Setting up good communication processes that allow continuing conversation, trust-building and joint planning and action is found to be priceless.

For several regions there was 'evolutionary understanding' or key concepts and purposes like engagement, third mission, and learning region. Significant progress was seen between the two CDG visits a year apart, in terms of the way these ideas permeated and started being put to work. The work became deeper, more focused on real issues, and so more useful and challenging.

### **B.2.3 Other issues and future developments**

The term 'third mission', while central to PURE purposes and essential to bring universities into good working relations with regions, is also a problem. Engagement need to influence and inform all aspects of teaching and research. It is not a separate 'third task'.

It is helpful to think of the ways that universities can act as responsible citizens, and exploit their unique advantages in the public interest.

Looking ahead, different messages need to get to different parties. Some of this translation into ongoing local action needs to be driven by the link person and consultative group in each region.

Some regions are already planning dissemination events, such as Jamtland and Varmland alongside each other, and Northern Illinois later in 2011.

PURE can assist with dissemination events that bring the findings and conclusions for the region to its different stakeholders, along with wider comparative experience from other regions. This should be supported by local press releases. It might be in the latter part of 2010, or in 2011.

The PURE Network should be strengthened, using the enhanced and rebuilt Pascal Website.

It is too early to see much benefit from the specialised Clusters, although some agendas have now firmed up, as Part III of the Ostersund report shows.

A different kind of cluster, of economically and geographically similar regions, may be good. Initially the strongest will be a grouping of the large metropolitan regions.

The more rural regions, which have much smaller populations and different economic circumstances, also have much in common. Almost all PURE regions also have an interest in the 'rural and remote' by virtue of their rural hinterlands.

It may be possible from the latter part of 2010 for all regions to access the work of all the specialised clusters to the extent of their interest, as well as connecting closely with regions with which they have most in common.

Sometimes inter-regional linkages between unlike regions are of great value, as between Jamtland and Kent; Essex wishes to connect with and learn from Varmland.

There is the potential for universities within different regions to partner with others elsewhere, where needs and aspirations are similar. This may be easier than local partnerships, where competition for students and resources may be severe.

The take-up and use of benchmarking has been slow and hesitant, partly from initial misunderstanding of its purposes. Several regions have taken it up and enthusiasm has followed as benefits are realised. Other regions should be encouraged and helped to undertake benchmarking, by the region as well as by the universities.

Once both parties have attempted benchmarking, the two perspectives should be brought together in an action-oriented dialogue that identifies gaps and opportunities.

Benchmarking is said to have opened eyes and doors where it has been tried. It has thrown up a number of examples of good practice that could be shared via the Website.

Pascal needs to bring together the PURE experience of benchmarking for further consideration, at the next meeting in Botswana and again in 2011 in Munich. By 2012 it may be possible to bring regions' experience together as the basis of a manual for practitioners.

It will be useful and timely now for regions to contribute examples of good practice to the Website to share and learn across the Network. Some guidance may be needed.

If possible all regions should remain active in the PURE Network and use the Website in 2011. It would be useful if each region responds to its final report from PURE with a new or updated action plan which is shared with others.



This could identify one or two other regions where linkage would be of most value. Exchange visits might be arranged to accelerate development. In such places as Southern Hungary with Croatia, cross-border developments may enrich our understanding of regions and their development.

In unstable and rapidly changing global conditions, regions suffer uncertainty and churning. In some places regions are being disbanded, or amalgamated with others. Changes of personnel in key positions can disrupt progress. This underlines the need to embed engagement institutionally and culturally. PURE can help regions to carry the engagement agenda into new authority configurations.

### **B.3 Factors influencing future developments**

Change of the kind that PURE is about takes longer than two years to achieve. Continuing participation in a strengthening network with improving tools (clusters, exchanges, benchmarking, putting partnership to work in areas of urgent need, etc) will enhance return on investment in the initial two-year phase.

Regions can remain in active PURE membership at different levels and costs, according to their circumstances and needs.

The uncertain short-term future of the global economy (fear of a double-dip recession, different reports about economic recovery from one place to another) makes it difficult for new regions to commit to a long-term project like PURE. This could change in the course of 2011.

Continuing destabilising change and entirely new problems – environmental sustainability, alternative energy, new levels and forms of unemployment – call for radically different solutions. This makes PURE still more valuable and relevant.

PURE may facilitate new transitions where changing national contexts alter regional government with abolition or merging of regions etc.