PASCAL UNIVERSITIES REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT PROJECT (PURE)

PURE Briefing Paper No. 7

Programme of Work from the Beginning of 2009 to May 2009

This briefing paper is mainly for the guidance of regions, especially the coordinating Link Partners, but also for the members of Consultative Development Groups

A. Preliminary work

By the beginning of 2009 PURE Cohort 1 participating regions will generally have completed **contracts** via the University of Glasgow Finance Office and provided the Pascal Glasgow office with a **snapshot profile** to be mounted on the Pascal PURE website. Material specific to each region within this website will be password protected and available only to other partners in PURE and members of review teams, unless otherwise agreed.

Regions will have identified an organizing **Link Partner**, and a means of liaising locally through a small **Regional Coordinating Group (RCG)**. One member will if possible be available to join review work with one or more review teams, known as **Consultative Development Groups (CDGs)**. Reciprocal visiting and reviewing should benefit each region, adding to inter-regional peer exchange and learning.

CDGs will have been identified for each region, and dates agreed for visits between the beginning of March and early May. One member, known as the **Coordinating Lead Reviewer (CLR)**, will serve as coordinator and main link person to the core PURE team and project.

Regions wishing to take part, but unable to prepare in time, will be grouped with a view to comprising a 2nd cohort commencing mid-year.

B. January - early March 2009

In the early weeks of 2009 [see BP 6], keeping in mind the full spectrum of issues including the economic, each region should taken stock, and prepare for a CDG visit.

A **short pre-visit Region Briefing Paper** should be prepared in two parts, and made available for the CDG not less than two weeks before the visit is due. Note or bullet form documentation may be more useful than extensive description. No other template documentation will be required.

Part 1

1. Clarify what is meant by **the region** in this project e.g. historical and cultural, long-term administrative and legal, or specially created for a particular development purpose. Comment on the advantages and difficulties of the nature and understanding of the region involved. [One general benefit from the PURE project should be to gain a better understanding of what kind of region is effective for what purposes.]

2. Set out briefly **key characteristics** in terms of geography, economy, demography, social structure, trends and changes, as these affect PURE and the development agenda.

3. Identify and draw together a reference list of the main **data sources** available on the socio-economic, environmental, etc. condition of the region, and recent trends.

4. Summarise any existing efforts to **monitor and benchmark** progress against purposes and targets. Please comment on any interest in and pressure for the measurement of quality and outcomes, including value for money auditing, that you are aware of in the region.

[It is hoped that the project will assist an understanding of what kinds of indicators and quantitative measures of regional development and the contribution of HEIs to this work and are useful.]

5. List the **main existing forms of collaboration** between **HEIs and the region**. For this purpose you may need to consider the region as a single administrative entity, but also note and include more localized and specialized significant HEI partnerships with other stakeholders - public, private, and NGO or third sector.

Part 2

1. What are

   (a) the main **problems and challenges?**

   (b) the main **development aspirations**, that are shared by stakeholders in the region?

   Please consider the full spectrum of civil, economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors, including issues of sustainability, where these apply.

2. What are the **main changes that are looked for** in taking part in PURE?

   2.1 For the **region as a whole**, and/or for particular communities and interests within it.

   2.2 Within and on the part of **higher education institutions** i.e. sought by the HEIs themselves, and looked for by other stakeholders from HEIs.

   2.3 In terms of how **regional and local government** are managed.

   2.4 In terms of the role and policies of **central government.**

3. What **key issues do you wish to discuss** with the CDG when it visits your region?

C. January onwards and March-May 2009

The intention of the CDG review visits conducted during this period is to inform the CDG, and to enable better understanding all round, so that participation in PURE can be of the greatest possible benefit to the region.

The idea is not to impress, but to explain, analyse and problematise. The more open and non-defensive the meetings, the more valuable the visit and its aftermath will be.

Much may be learned within the region simply by the process of preparing for the visit, defining problems and sharing understanding about ambitions and difficulties. So far as possible the visit should be planned in a way that will allow the region to identify what it is going to do subsequently, in order to make progress in problem-solving and improved productive partnership.

Overall Project Management and Development

Administrative liaison with the CDGs, the CLRs, and the regions and their steering groups via the Link Partner, will be with the Glasgow PURE office. Reporting and analysis of the work and interim findings will be through the academic director, Chris Duke.

For this purpose we will use a **Regional Advisory Network** (RAN) of Region Link Partners and Coordinating Lead Reviewers. This Network will work as an open forum to plan and discuss work and findings throughout the life of the project. Its ideas and comments will by agreement be posted on the Pascal PURE website and available there for wider discussion.

Benchmarking

The central PURE team is preparing benchmarking tools, both for the regions and for the higher education institutions (HEIs). These will be available to begin using, in time for the CDG visit. It is not expected that they will be more than an aid for study, review and planning at this stage.

As the PURE project proceeds, to the end of 2010, it is expected that regions and HEIs will begin using the benchmarking tools as a means of identifying their situation and any movement, and of comparing with regions and HEIs elsewhere that have similar purposes, characteristics and interests.

D. The CDG Visits

Before the CDG Visit

During this period, the region's **Link Partner (LP)** should liaise with the Glasgow PURE office, and with the CLR who is preparing for the visit, and agree on a schedule of meetings that will enable the visiting CDG and the host region to have a well-informed, open and constructive discussion about higher education and the development aspirations of the region.

The planning and schedule preparation should keep in mind what the CDG can do after the visit: (a) to report back and share the work with the full PURE meeting in May 2009; and (b) to help the region to take forward its self-study in order to get practical improvements as well as better understanding.

The Regional Coordinating Group (RCG) convened by the Link Partner will be responsible for sending electronically to the CLR, as review coordinator, information in the form of a **Region Briefing Paper** prepared for the visit. This should be done two weeks prior to the visit.

It is also the responsibility of the Link Partner to prepare a programme of meetings and visits setting out whom the CDG will meet and where. In preparing this the LP needs to liaise with the region's RCG and with the CDG and to make the finalised schedule available at least two weeks prior to the start of the visit.

It is important to involve as wide a range of stakeholders in the region as possible in the meetings. A joint meeting with HEIs and regional authorities is desirable, perhaps as an opening session. The CDG also needs some quiet (evening) time on its own during the visit to reflect and share its impressions as it goes along.

This like other administrative and logistical matters should be handled through liaison with the Glasgow PURE regional office. The Glasgow team will liaise with each region and with each CDG on matters of travel, accommodation etc.

The CDG, through its CLR, will study the initial regional profile, the Region Briefing Paper, and other available materials about or prepared by the region. It will thus be able identify any further information needs. This prior preparation will enable it to enter into well informed and relevant questioning and discussion with the regional steering group, and with different partners and interests within the region.

The Consultative Review Visit

The meeting and visits during this first CDG review visit should cover the central purposes of the region's PURE involvement, and what it hopes to achieve from its participation in PURE.

Overall the visit should identify the main obstacles and barriers to be overcome, and the strategy for tackling these through development and partnership work over the coming months.

No more elaborate standard template will be required for the review visits beyond the Region Briefing Paper outline above. The idea is to allow each region to focus on its priority needs, according to its unique circumstances. The visit may however lead to some redefinition, or extended definition, of these needs.

PURE HQ undertakes to provide by the time of the review draft benchmarking tools for immediate discussion (see above), and for progressive use and possible revision throughout the project.

The ongoing use of these tools may prove to be a major lasting benefit to assist the region and its HEIs in making progress on a shared development agenda. This aspect of the project may also make clear what kinds of quantitative measures are useful, and in what other ways progress and benefit may need to be monitored and reported.

After the CDG Visit

An outcome of the work in the first half of 2009, with the benefit of data placed on the PURE website about other regions, will be to identify regions with which association and exchange would be especially useful.

This will assist the formation of specialist sub-clusters at the time of the Vancouver meeting in May. Where appropriate these sub-clusters will be created within the full PURE 1st cohort and regions enabled to join one or more as they wish. Such groupings will play a part in the more detailed development work of the regions within PURE from June 2009 onwards.

Whereas it is the task of the region, led by the Link Partner, to produce the profile, background information, and first analysis of key issues for the review, the CDG has the task of preparing a report for the PURE core team. These reports will provide vital input to the May 2009 Vancouver planning meeting.

The reports should be brief and concise, setting out the region's circumstance, needs and priorities. They should explain its priority needs and ambitions for engagement and regional development, identifying the main challenges and barriers agreed during the CDG visit. They should highlight the region's chosen work programme, enabling the meeting to focus the work of the full PURE project, and areas for special attention and cluster activity, over the next twelve months of the project

It is the duty of the CLR to see that this report is provided to the Glasgow office and the project Director in a timely way, but its production is a joint effort of the full CDG. In general these brief regional reports should be sent within two weeks of completion of the CDG visit.

This and other reporting by the CDG, through the CLR, will be on a consultative basis with the region, through its Link Partner. Regional information for and from the visits will form the basis of the next phase to the end of 2009 and into 2010. Regions will be encouraged to place this information on the PURE website, together with the agreed reports of the review teams.

It will be helpful if one section of the report can refer to any use of the draft benchmark tools, and any suggestions for changes at that stage.

E. The Vancouver Meeting

We would very much wish all regions to propose papers for the main Vancouver PASCAL conference.

The call for abstracts is open at http://www.obs-pascal.com/node/810 with a deadline of 31st January.

The conference itself runs from 18th to 20th May. The 2nd PURE workshop starts after lunch on Wednesday 20th May and ends at the end of Thursday 21st. There may be spill-over meetings on Friday 22nd that small groups may arrange between themselves, but we hope that most people if they so wish can return on evening flights on the 21st.

Registration for the conference and accommodation options will be available from early in the New Year. You should look for details on the PASCAL site. We will of course also remind you.

Chris Duke December 2008