

## **REVIEW OF RTPI INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

Paper from the Secretariat

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

*This paper was developed from a version considered by the RTPI International Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009.*

*The original paper was drafted to seek the International Committee's views on the Institute's international strategic priorities. However, at the meeting, Janet O'Neill and Richard Summers requested that, as there were implications for the Institute's Corporate Planning exercise, the paper should be revised to consider how resources might be prioritised in this area. The exercise has thus become a broader strategic review.*

*The paper begins by considering the international environment and the increasingly important role that planning has to play in it. It moves on to propose what the RTPI's mission should be in responding to this environment and what the priorities should be for pursuing this mission. The paper then briefly reviews the Institute's existing work areas, and concludes with a series of propositions designed to assist the Board in determining directions for the future.*

### **2. BACKGROUND**

At a critical time of debate at global level about the value of planning it is appropriate to review the RTPI's strategic international priorities. For 25 years, the Institute's international activities focused on working with European and Commonwealth colleagues to a great extent via multi-lateral organisations, with some selected bilateral relations, for example with the American Planning Association and (in the past) with the Russian Scientific Institute for City Planning, TsNIIP.

With a new global awareness of the urgent need for better and more sustainably planned settlements the Institute's activities have begun to concentrate more strongly on the Global Planners Network (GPN) and the activities of UN-HABITAT (the United Nations Human Settlements Programme). This review considers the implications of this shift and, reflecting existing resource constraints, it scopes out activities that will be priorities for the future

### **3. THE CONTEXT**

The rapid growth of urban populations, unchecked peri-urban sprawl, mushrooming slums and the threats of climate change have impacts that are no longer just local; their scale is so great they affect everyone on the planet. All demand a spatial planning response.

These are the themes of UN-HABITAT in its 2008 State of the World Cities Report, and again in its 2009 Global Report on Human Settlements (GRHS). They are repeated by the World Bank's 2009 Global Development Report and they are central to discussions about the global response to climate change.

At World Urban Forum 3 in Vancouver in 2006 (the third of UN-HABITAT's "summits", now established as a biennial event), planning organisations responded by forming the Global Planners Network. The Vancouver Declaration which established GPN

asserts that *'we cannot have sustainable communities without sustainable urbanisation, and without planning there is no sustainable urbanisation.'*

The RTPI was instrumental in GPN's formation and it has the potential and perhaps a duty to play a leading role in the development of the profession to meet the challenges of global urbanisation. As one of the world's longest-standing professional organisations the Institute's world-wide recognition and global influence are without parallel. With around 1,000 members living outside the UK (in about 90 countries) it has a breadth of expertise that is quite unique. The RTPI's reputation, excellence and global reach in education and its strong 'brand image' ensure a steady stream of inquiries from overseas about membership, networking opportunities and support and advice. From a commercial point of view the RTPI's reputation creates opportunities for members in consultancy and international contracts.

We have much to learn from abroad, too, allowing international practice to inform and extend our own practice of planning; foreign experience can be compelling, as shown each year at the Planning Convention.

This context means the RTPI's international activities have a major role to play in the growth of the Institute as a whole. The RTPI's international activities will complement the domestic in raising the profile of the Institute across the board.

#### **4. RTPI'S INTERNATIONAL MISSION**

In this context, we suggest that the Institute's international mission is

***'to promote spatial planning internationally and to develop its capacity to secure territorial cohesion and sustainable human settlements in all parts of the world'***

In the context of the European Union, this means working for the European goal of territorial cohesion so that the benefits of European economic and social development are distributed fairly across all its regions; in developing countries, it means managing the spatial consequences of migration and of rural and urban poverty; across the globe it means creating the policies which respond to climate change and the risk of natural disaster.

#### **5. ESTABLISHING NEW STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE INSTITUTE'S INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Our strongest suit is our wide and deep understanding of the value of planning in responding to the challenge of creating sustainable human settlements, at every scale, and wherever they are. We need to use these strengths to mobilise others, validate ideas and empower people. The opportunities to do this at the international level are great, but our resources are modest, so whatever we can put in must be used to best effect.

Having agreed new priorities we will need to find ways to fund them, if necessary with outside partners.

The starting point is to build upon activities which we and our members are already doing. The work we and the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP) have initiated for the Global Planners Network and the opportunity we have been offered in

relation to the groundwork for the Global Report on Human Settlements in 2011 - the focus of which is on Climate Change – are a sound basis for this.

We should concentrate on the things we are good at, which are: **advocacy**, **building capacity** and **communicating and networking**. The grid below shows how the Institute's key activities – its projects and topic areas - support these priorities:

Project or topic	Advocacy	Building Capacity	Communication & Networking
<b>GPN (Global Planners Network)</b>	Publicity for Vancouver Declaration and Re-inventing Planning	Create the Global Planning Practice Network (GP2N)	Contribute to key events e.g. GPN input into next World Urban Forum; GPN Congress 2010 on Climate Change; offer to host GPN Congress 2012
<b>UN-HABITAT</b>	Research input into UN-HABITAT publications:  Global Reports on Human Settlements 2011 and 2013  State of the World's Cities Reports	Support the Habitat Professionals Forum	Be active in World Urban Campaign; prepare for World Urban Forum 5 as above with GPN and/or independently e.g. planning for networking event based on current RTPI/CAP work on Commonwealth cities, picking up on WUF5 theme of "the Right to the City"
<b>IFHP (International Federation for Housing &amp; Planning)</b>	Possible book to mark 2013 IFHP Centenary/ 2014 RTPI Centenary	Share best practice with other planning organisations	Help reform and develop IFHP
<b>ECTP-CEU (European Council of Spatial Planners)</b>	Influence EU spatial planning policy (note 1) Chance to contribute to a publication marking centenary of planning in Europe	Support smaller planning organisations in Europe; help create an independent planning profession	Support for ECTP-CEU policy initiatives e.g. organise a professional conference on a European Spatial Planning topic jointly with UK ESPON Contact Point in 2010
<b>ESPON* UK Contact Point and Network</b>	Inform the UK voice on research outputs and development of the European spatial research programme through advice to the UK Government	Support members' work by disseminating material on urbanisation and development indicators. Promote and support involvement of UK planning researchers.	Delivery of web resources, publications and networking events.
<b>Commonwealth Association of Planners</b>	State of the Commonwealth Cities Report	Support smaller planning organisations in the Commonwealth; help create an independent planning profession	CAP Biennial Conference Autumn 2010; opportunity to support Small Islands Planning conference 2010
<b>Membership, Education &amp; Lifelong Learning, Member Services; Regions &amp; Nations</b>	Alert members to universal value and application of planning principles; promote planning as a career with international prospects; identify consultancy opportunities (note 2);	Work with planning schools; accredit courses; offer education and lifelong learning courses / modules	Develop planner-to-planner contacts via exchanges, placements and secondments; support Regions & Nations on exchanges and study visits; international sessions at Planning Convention
<b>Communication</b>	Raise profile of planning, promote consultancy, give publicity for members' work in developing planning systems and practice overseas	Use RTPI Web-site to inform members about what is happening in planning elsewhere	Promote Networks & Associations, particularly International Development Network
<b>Policy Team</b>	Link key domestic topics e.g. climate change, bio-diversity, habitat protection to global, Commonwealth, EU level as appropriate		Develop events/activities with ECTP-CEU, ESPON, CAP & IFHP as above and seek to make effective bilateral links (note 3)

\*ESPON = European Observation Network on Territorial Development and Cohesion

- 1) National organisations cannot address EU institutions directly: only supra-national organisations may do this
- 2) The Institute is part of a joint initiative "Professional Institutes UK-China" with 15 other built environment professional organisations raising the profile of UK professional organisations in China and promoting the role of professional education and training
- 3) Good bilateral links already exist with the American Planning Association (APA) and the Hong Kong Institute of Planners. Approaches have also been made by the Société française des urbanistes (SFU) which would like to create links between French and UK/Ireland Young Planners, and the Akademie für Raumforschung und Landesplanung (ARL - German Academy for Spatial Planning Research and Regional Policy) which has proposed an Anglo-German seminar on perspective on Climate Change in January 2010.

## 6. PROPOSED APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING RTPI'S INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Institute draws upon various resources to pursue its international activities. Separating out these and their resource implications is not easy because so many non-quantifiable spin-off or overlapping benefits arise. But, while the risks of simplifying the complexities of the situation must be underscored, the following types of activity can be distinguished:

- i. Externally funded activities. Recent examples include the ESPON project, the GPN self-diagnostic tool and the State of Commonwealth Cities Report. The Global Planners Practitioners Network (GP2N) has been identified as a possible future project.
  - **Cost implications for the Institute:** Positive as they are income-generating. However, they are critically dependent on inputs from RTPI staff.
  - **Potential Benefits to RTPI Mission:** Very high – potential to extend the RTPI profile in high priority areas.
  - **Proposed Strategy:** Identify and pursue
- ii. Utilising the know-how and contacts of members and other contacts. Between them, the International Committee, and the IDN constitute a body of professional expertise working in a wide range of environments. Other potential resources lie in the wider community of international planners through the GP2N
  - **Cost implications for the Institute:** very low – usually limited to expenses to attend meetings.
  - **Potential Benefits to RTPI Mission:** Very high
  - **Proposed Strategy:** Refine and develop
- iii. Partnership working with planning and other organisations both overseas and in the UK. Over the years the Institute has built up a wide range of partnerships and networks. Deep and long-standing relationships have been built up with the Commonwealth Association of Planners and ECTP-CEU (European Council of Spatial Planners) and more recently the Global Planners Network. Presidential visits also fit within this broad category.
  - **Cost implications for the Institute:** Variable and, given present accounting arrangements, sometimes difficult to quantify:
  - **Potential Benefits to RTPI Mission:** Variable
  - **Proposed Strategy:** Carefully appraise to assess cost and benefits.
- iv. Collaborating with colleagues in other departments within the Institute in ways that add value to the Institute's overall profile. Examples include contributions to the planning convention, policy inputs into the EU, communications, education and course accreditation.
  - **Cost implications for the Institute:** dependent on ways of working, but potentially low, although it can divert from other priority work areas.
  - **Potential Benefits to RTPI Mission:** Significant synergistic opportunities
  - **Proposed Strategy:** Establish closer working relationships with other departments to establish opportunities and priorities.

- v. The international affairs officer is the key coordinator of these different work streams.
- **Cost implications for the Institute:** Low – one part-time member of staff (3 days per week + 1 day managing International Development Network )
  - **Potential Benefits to RTPI Mission:** High – mission-critical.
  - **Proposed Strategy:** Support and engage

## 7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

RTPI's International activities are extremely varied and wide-ranging. Together they strongly support the Institute's overall mission of promoting spatial planning. They bring the Institute a significant international exposure which the Institute could exploit in a number of ways.

However, at a time of budgetary constraint it is important to review the Institute's activities to ensure they are targeted at high priority areas.

Revenue-raising opportunities lie in attracting additional external project funding and increasing overseas membership.

The project-based activities that should be prioritised with regard to the three major priority action areas are the following:

1. **Advocacy:** Contributing to major initiatives e.g. UN-HABITAT Global Report on Human Settlements, World Urban Campaign
2. **Building Capacity:** Global Planners Practitioners Network (GP2N) and, perhaps, consideration of professional education in countries where it is not adequately provided.
3. **Communicating and Networking:** Strengthening global networks through the GPN, GP<sup>2</sup>N, CAP, ECTP-CEU, ESPON and International Development Network.

**ANNEX**  
**INITIALS and ACRONYMS used in RTPI International Affairs**  
with hyperlinks

See <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/1063&ap=1> for a list of planning organisations world-wide, including the national planning institutes of 60 countries.

<b>INITIALS</b>	<b>STANDS FOR</b>
<a href="#"><u>AESOP</u></a>	Association of European Schools of Planning
<a href="#"><u>APA</u></a>	American Planning Association
<a href="#"><u>CAP</u></a>	Commonwealth Association of Planners
<a href="#"><u>CCGHS</u></a>	Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements
<a href="#"><u>CIP</u></a>	Canadian Institute of Planners
<a href="#"><u>DfID</u></a>	(UK) Department for International Development
<a href="#"><u>EAROPH</u></a>	Eastern Regional Organisation for Planning and Housing (originally part of IFHP)
<a href="#"><u>ECTP-CEU</u></a>	European Council of Spatial Planners – Conseil européen des urbanistes (originally European Council of Town Planners)
<a href="#"><u>ESPON</u></a>	European Observation Network on Territorial Development and Cohesion (originally European Spatial Planning Observation Network)
<a href="#"><u>FIG</u></a>	Fédération Internationale des Géomètres - International Federation of Surveyors
<a href="#"><u>GPN</u></a>	Global Planners Network
<a href="#"><u>GRHS</u></a>	Global Report on Human Settlements - biennial UN-HABITAT publication (odd years)
<a href="#"><u>HPF</u></a>	Habitat Professionals Forum set up by UN-HABITAT
<a href="#"><u>IC</u></a>	(RTPI) International Committee
<a href="#"><u>IDN</u></a>	(RTPI) International Development Network
<a href="#"><u>INTA</u></a>	International Association for Urban Development (originally International New Towns Association)
<a href="#"><u>IFHP</u></a>	International Federation for Housing & Planning
<a href="#"><u>ISOCaRP</u></a>	International Society of City & Regional Planners (spin-off from IFHP)
<a href="#"><u>IULA</u></a>	International Union of Landscape Architects
<a href="#"><u>NICIS</u></a>	(Dutch) National Institute for City Initiatives and Strategies – may create a new body NICIS-international
<a href="#"><u>PIA</u></a>	Planning Institute of Australia
<a href="#"><u>PIUK-China</u></a>	Professional Institutes UK-China
<a href="#"><u>SDT</u></a>	Research tool devised by RTPI-CAP team for GPN work
<a href="#"><u>SFU</u></a>	Société française des urbanistes
<a href="#"><u>SWCR</u></a>	State of the World Cities Report - biennial UN-HABITAT publication (even years)
<a href="#"><u>UIA</u></a>	Union Internationale des Architectes – International Union of Architects
<a href="#"><u>UN-HABITAT</u></a>	United Nations Human Settlements Programme (originally UN Commission for Human Settlements/UNCHS)
<a href="#"><u>WUF</u></a>	World Urban Forum - biennial meetings organised by UN-HABITAT: WUF1 Nairobi 2002, WUF2 Barcelona 2004, WUF 3 Vancouver 2006, WUF 4 Nanjing 2008, WUF 5 Rio 2010.