

PASCAL Report to the South Transdanubia Region

PURE Work 2009-2010

A. Profile and context of the region – distinctive and unique features

Each PURE region is unique. Different conditions influence what it can do and how. It is essential to understand what these are to be able to learn from other regions, and see what will and what will not work in your own region.

Key features of South Transdanubia include: the legacy of the second half of last century and the high hopes, and disappointments from the nineties, made tougher by the current global financial crisis.

Caution, distrust and cynicism are a cultural reality; but so is the new optimism of a new younger generation of 'civic entrepreneurs'.

The central government retains tight policy control and regions cannot operate freely to make policy according to regional priorities. More effective devolution is needed to be a fully powered region in Hungary (see also Annex 1 below).

Disbanding the Ministry of Education and Culture has removed the national reference point for this work by the region, and its source of financial support.

The older rich legacy of Pecs with its history, charm and the success of the European Capital of Culture Year 2010 is important to build on. Increasing stability of the wider region and gradually increasing accessibility should help future development.

B. Formal and informal means of engagement

What has happened during two years with PURE, and what should happen now?
What regional priorities can be assisted by engaging with the PURE clusters?

The region has achieved much more through joining PURE than you may recognise. Creating and learning to use the means of working together is almost invisible, but it is the essential basis for engaging usefully. There is real progress. More patient work is needed to strengthen trust and commitment.

The region started from a low base of both trust and understanding. There was no wide tradition or comprehension of engagement or '3rd mission'; nor of the idea of lifelong learning. Holistic and joined-up thinking now takes place.

These ideas are now more widely discussed, through involvement in the work of PURE. There is better understanding of what they mean and why they matter across government, university and some business sectors, and of how to proceed.

Informal partnerships between individual professors and businesses, and informal engagement in the rural, health agrarian and cultural arenas, provide a good basis for more formal agreements, especially between the two universities and their own cities and counties.

The Pecs Learning Region concept is being adopted through the Pecs Learning City-Region Forum, with stronger commitment at senior levels.

The small University of Kaposvar has a shorter and less traditional past. It is a very good example of a university well engaged across many fields. The service and development dimension of its work appears well embedded in both university and city.

Pecs' European Capital of Culture experience is important. Do not let it be a one-off but build on it through agreed small practical steps for more success in the next three years. It shows how the two universities can work in harmony, not competing but doing different things in local partnerships while collaborating region-wide.

The whole region has the charm and potential of cultural diversity and natural resources, for example for eco-tourism. Cultural diversity can be an asset if wisely managed nationally and locally; mishandled it can lead to a national identity crisis and inter-community conflict. The region can provide a model to other parts of Hungary in managing cultural diversity for social inclusion.

Long-term integrated strategic planning can enable the region to develop on lines consistent with a lower energy, greener and more sustainable global future. The region can be a role model and leader in this area as well.

The region, including its different counties and cities, should now identify and undertake specific practical and manageable priority projects.

Choose projects from for example promoting tourism, exploiting natural and cultural assets, nurturing innovation in new smart industries, and promoting economically viable and sustainable rural enterprises.

Projects should be planned to enlist university help in carrying them out.

This can be by means of applied research, short-course teaching programmes, and expert advice. The experience of success from these will strengthen the basis for future engagement.

C. Benefits and prospective future gains from international networking

South Transdanubia Region and its universities have not tried PURE benchmarking. With the two benchmarking tools you can take stock of what you are doing, and where the gaps are. With this knowledge as a base you can monitor and enhance progress in getting value from partnership between the region and its HEIs year on year. Every effort should be made to trial benchmarking in 2011, and again in 2013. You may want first to modify the tools to fit Hungarian conditions. Try if so to use university staff in doing this, and look to PASCAL for help if necessary.

The PURE network can help the region in several ways to develop better by exchanging experience. We advise using the PURE clusters in areas important to the region: systems and methods for regional innovation and renewal; building on the Pecs European Capital of Culture status to strengthen culture and the creative industries; providing a lead and a model within Hungary in helping rural and remote eg. border regions with ethnically diverse peoples.

The region would also benefit from international networking on 'Tertiary Systems' (see annex 1 list of desirable national policy changes including education), and from work with other in the Social Inclusion and Active Citizenship cluster.

The region should consider developing a national leadership role in Hungary in work on lifelong learning and learning city-regions, using PURE to give international profile and mutual benefit.

During 2011 you could identify and write up examples of good practice to share in the PURE network (see annex 2 for suggestions from RVR2 report). You should examine examples from other appropriate try them out in your region. You could also create your own regional manual of successful local engagement projects.

Try to involve more English-speaking colleagues in public administration and the universities in international learning and exchanges.

D. Getting more value from engagement between the region and the universities

Some links are easier to sustain and build on than others. It will be a fully self-directing region until Hungary clearly recognises and values them. The local links between the two universities and their immediate cities and counties however look promising and should be developed through joint programmes and practical projects.

Each partner manages its own affairs and orders its own business. To engage effectively each must work out what arrangements hinder and what helps fruitful engagement. We advise the following strategies.

For the whole region. Keep together the PURE Regional Consultative Group (RCG) and continue its work. Link it to a Regional Forum including the three counties and two universities and cities, as a think-tank for future regional development. Use this to develop a clear voice especially for EU funding priorities to the region. Each county, city and university must have a seat on the Forum steering committee.

Use the Forum to connect up and share experience of local (sub-regional) engagement between the different authorities and the universities.

The counties and the cities of Kaposvar and Pecs should maintain Agreements using their universities routinely in planning and implementing policies, and their expertise and facilities to meet local needs.

Applied research, monitoring and evaluation can be commissioned.

Each sub-regional authority should engage university staff to assist in identifying priorities and carry project out.

If neither local university has the required expertise, as benchmarking may show, engagement with HEIs elsewhere may be necessary.

Joint funding of new infrastructure, personnel equipment investment in specific priority areas should then be attempted to fill these gaps locally. If possible also co-fund new areas of teaching and research required within the region.

The HEIs will gain from closer and more systematic consultation with the region, and direct involvement the planning and execution of policy.

Good individual and departmental engagement initiatives in both universities need full recognition and support at the top.

Reward systems, incentives and career benefits should steer staff and groups in all areas of teaching and scholarship into engagement clearly supported by senior management. This includes applied research, practical consultancy and professional short-course updating.

MOUs should be used and kept up to date with each city and county authority.

E/ Evidence that the work of PURE will be sustained in the future

The work of many development projects stops when contract ends. It is important not to allow this to happen.

PURE has stimulated closer cooperation between the two universities, and more of a sense of a South Transdanubia region among the three counties.

To sustain this work the county and city authorities and the two universities working together through the Regional Forum, the ongoing RCG and an executive steering group should prepare and implement, as intended, **a new joint action plan for the next few years** setting out deadlines, 'deliverables', and responsibilities.

The Action Plan should include the region itself and both universities undertaking PURE benchmarking (possibly modified) in 2011, and repeating it in 2013, to monitor progress and to improve capacity.

If possible regional stakeholders should be brought together for a dissemination and planning conference-workshop on South Transdanubia work and achievements within PURE. Ideally the meeting would use this report and be an occasion to develop a new Regional Engagement Action Plan. If the region can join the EU RUcoLL project, this could provide the means to sustain the momentum of the work.

The City and the University of Pecs should keep alive and nurture the desire to be a learning city-region, and encourage Kaposvár to join. They should continue to support and develop the Lifelong Learning Forum as a guiding principle and a way to keep the pressure on the different parties to sustain agreed purposes.

Kaposvar University should also consider becoming a member of the PUMR (PASCAL Universities for a Modern Renaissance) programme; and like Pecs linking one-to-one with selected other universities such as Foggia in Puglia.

The EU RUCOLL may provide a means in 2011 for the region to remain part of the PURE Network. Using the Website, benchmarking, and tapping into the work of several clusters will build up its capacity for stronger regional development.

Annex 1 Desirable Changes at National Level

- support greater ***flexibility in university curriculum development***;
- ease ***pathways to accrediting new programmes and elements*** in response to demonstrated needs, for example by relaxing the course-coding system;
- enable effective ***transparent credit transfer and progression from technical*** (VET or further) ***into higher education***, also enabling more continuing education and lifelong learning of adults as well as young people.

- review universities' governance allowing **greater flexibility to create spin-off companies** from research into commercial activities, allowing part of the surplus to be returned to the University and to support non-profit making endeavours
- **raise the quantum of EU funding flowing to rural and remote areas via the Leader Programme**, for balanced social and economic development that builds on traditional knowledge and skills
- **ensure that programmes respond to needs and priorities best known locally.**

Annex 2 Examples of Good Practice

- The Pécs Biotechnology Cluster and BIB
- The integrated Pécs City-University-Region and Management Centre partnership approach to the European Year of Culture, centred on heritage for sustained post-2010 development and involving a growing NGO civil society sector
- The strong ties between the UNESCO Heritage site in Pécs and the university's research and education program in archaeology.
- the City and University of Kaposvár as a strong working study in city-region-university development partnership
- the Kaposvár Health Centre with its different specialised components (Horse Academy, Clinic, Game-farming) as a model of transdisciplinary scholarly and academic development applied to developing the rural region, society and economy
- Karazs including the LEADER programme - a leading exemplar of integrative micro-regional rural development based on traditional knowledge and skills linked to the global economy
