

process further and address some of the gaps in our theoretical and methodological perspectives as well as issues related to linking practice to theory.



Specific themes we would like to develop in this conference include:

- The indirect impacts of planning intervention
- The socio-economic and socio-environmental contexts of planning evaluation
- Social and distributional indicators for quality of life and environmental quality
- Integration of ecological aspects into socio-economic planning and evaluation;
- How to capture the socio-environmental and socio-institutional effects of planning interventions;
- Methods to consider environmental, social, economic, and political interchange in evaluation;
- Tools for understanding planning success;
- More robust ways of measuring how well cities are performing from a range of perspectives and values.

Sessions will be organised in line with these themes and within the context of each session theoretical and methodological perspectives as well as issues related to linking practice to theory will be discussed. Practitioners and the evaluation team from the CIVITAS demonstration projects will join us on one of the days.

### Participation in the workshop

Academic participation in the workshop is limited to around 20 people with two participants from the four original participating countries namely Italy, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden. The remaining participants shall be selected from interested persons from other countries.

The workshop organisers will cover the costs of board and lodging in Edinburgh for the three conference days. Participants are expected to pay for their own travel expenses.

Interested participants are requested to send the title and a brief abstract of their paper to Angela Hull below at the latest by the end of September 2008.

### Further information

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SCHOOL OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Evaluation in Planning  
 7th International Workshop

## Towards methodological innovations in planning evaluation



10-12 December 2008

## Organisers and venue of the workshop



School of the Built Environment  
Heriot-Watt University  
Edinburgh, Scotland

## Co-ordinating Committee

- Professor Angela Hull
- Professor Dino Borri
- Professor Abdul Khakee
- Professor Donald Miller
- Dr Valeria Monno
- Professor Johan Woltjer



## Workshop Theme

Planning evaluation has a strong tradition of evaluating the success of local planning interventions. Despite enormous ingenuity, quantitative approaches have rarely been sufficient to identify the deadweight (BAU) scenario and the displacement, supply chain, multiplier and leakage effects when assessing scheme direct and indirect impacts. Inadequate data sets, poorly defined problems, poorly elaborated and or multiple objectives of planned interventions have added to the complexity in the evaluation research intelligence gathering exercise.



New demands have been placed on evaluation teams to identify the cost effectiveness of different solutions (individually, and in

combination) and to provide evidence of how planned interventions work in different contexts to inform decisions on what policy actions to take. Planning evaluation has become an activity aimed at a multi-dimensional understanding of reality. We see as a crucial challenge here the need to understand how planning proposals are linked to their social, economic and environmental/ ecological contexts.

At the same time, examining what quality of life means to ordinary citizens of urban areas has been a growth area in planning evaluation. Often these studies have offered little more than a straw poll ranking the importance of different variables across different cultures rather than seeking to understand how values and contextual factors vary from place to place. Understanding how well our cities are performing from a range of different population group values can help to capture the social distributional effects of development projects.



Qualitative methodologies are now being used with greater vigour to support the evaluation of some of these ex ante and ex post questions. This recognises that knowledge is subjective, relational, and mediated by our perceptions and beliefs. Planning evaluation is concentrated increasingly on the influence of institutional contexts, on processes of plan making and implementation. In this respect, behavioural science and postmodern critiques point to the relevance of practitioner and population group ‘cultures’ that provide theories and templates of meaning to legitimise their actions.



Some of the major factors that have led to the extension of the scope of planning evaluation include societal concern over the climate change and the distributional impacts of individual and institutional decisions, the importance of engagement with stakeholders who may use the evaluation results, and the perceived conflicts and complementarities between economic growth perspectives and nature conservation.

The Sixth Planning Evaluation conference was concerned with the importance and possibilities of taking institutional principles into consideration. A major aim of the papers presented was “to overcome the mechanistic and reductionist approaches to evaluation, to combine the issues of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity, to surmount the disciplinary barriers and integrate the different forms of knowledge within the evaluation process” (Khakee, Hull, Miller, Woltjer, forthcoming). The Seventh Planning Evaluation conference aims to take this