

**Regional**

**Studies**

**Association**

**THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM  
FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
POLICY AND RESEARCH**

*The Association welcomes as  
members all individuals and  
organisations who are interested  
in the study and understanding  
of regions and regionalism*

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2008 – 2013  
MID-TERM REVIEW AND FORWARD LOOK**

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## Introduction

This document presents the results of the mid-term review of the Regional Studies Association's Development Plan 2008–2013 and sets out new targets for the remainder of the planning period.

In the current context of financial austerity in much of the developed world, the success of the Association in reaching so many of its planned goals so early in the period has been particularly encouraging.

Significant changes have occurred within the Association over the past three years in terms of how we deliver benefits to our members, and further enhancements are planned as we develop our role in reinforcing the positive impact of the work of regional studies researchers and practitioners.

We are seeking to build upon existing collaborative partnerships, to use emerging technologies to improve communication with members and stakeholders around the world, and to more closely integrate the work of academics, policy makers and practitioners.

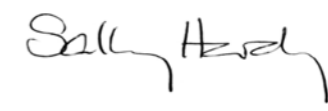
Finally, we are pleased to announce a major new investment in support for our members, with the release of an additional £250,000 of funding until the end of the Development Plan. This new funding will be available for research networks, event support, travel and conference attendance.

In presenting this review and revision of the Development Plan, the Association's Board seeks feedback from Association members and the wider community on what we have achieved and what we seek to do in the future. The last page of this document sets out the ways in which you can make your comments and views known to us.



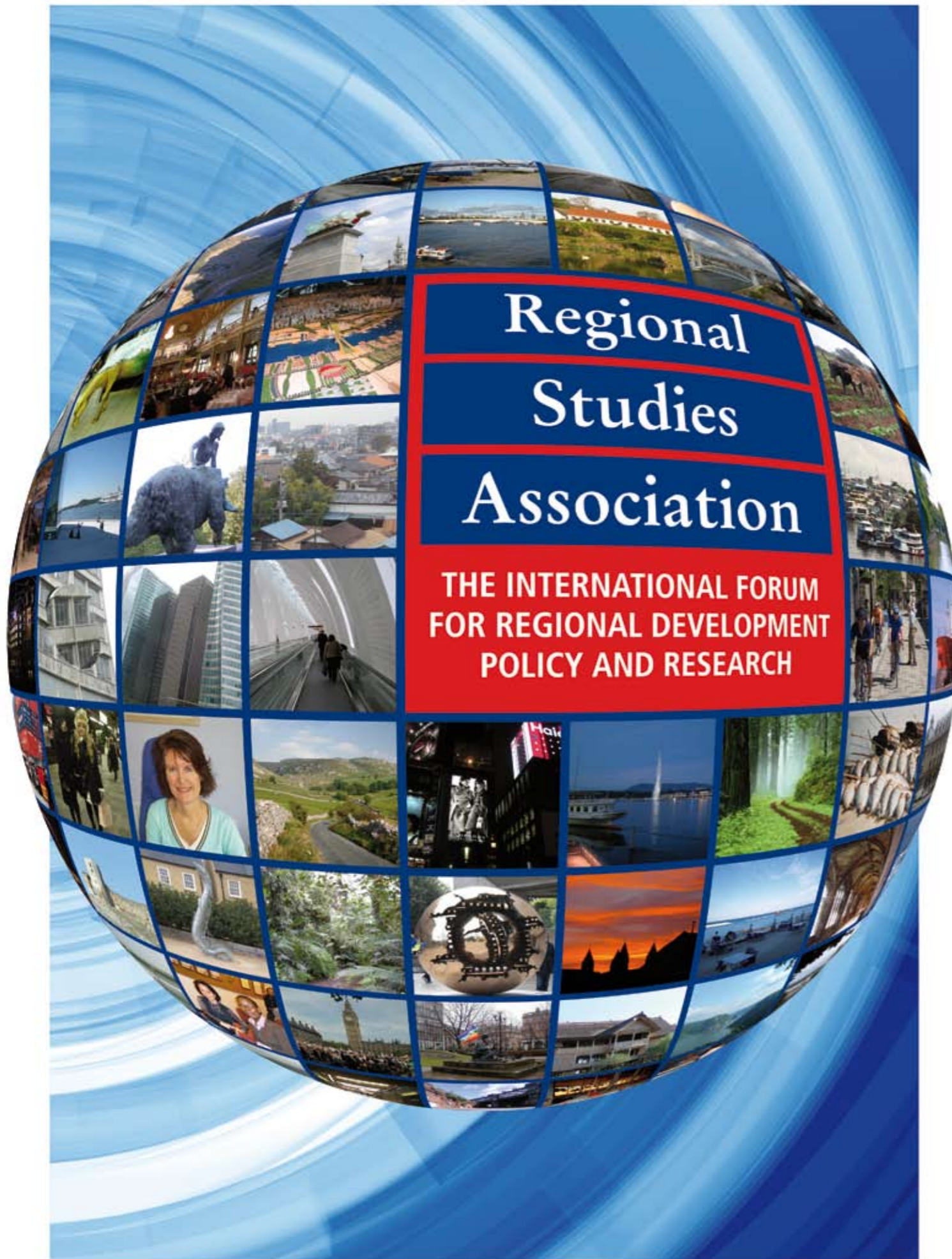
**Professor David Bailey**

*Chair  
Regional Studies Association*



**Sally Hardy**

*Chief Executive  
Regional Studies Association*



## Restating Our Role and Mission

The Regional Studies Association is a leading international learned society in the field of regional studies. It is a registered charity established in 1965 which incorporated in 2001. The company is limited by guarantee and is governed by a Board of Directors who are trustees, elected by the membership of the Association.

### **The Association was established as a charity to:**

1. Promote education in the field of regional studies by the exchange of ideas and information;
2. Stimulate and aid studies and research into regional planning, development and policy and to disseminate the results of such research.

### **The vision of the Regional Studies Association states:**

*The Regional Studies Association seeks to be the authoritative voice of and network for, academics, students, practitioners and policy makers in the study and understanding of regions and regionalism.*

### **The broad aims of the Association are:**

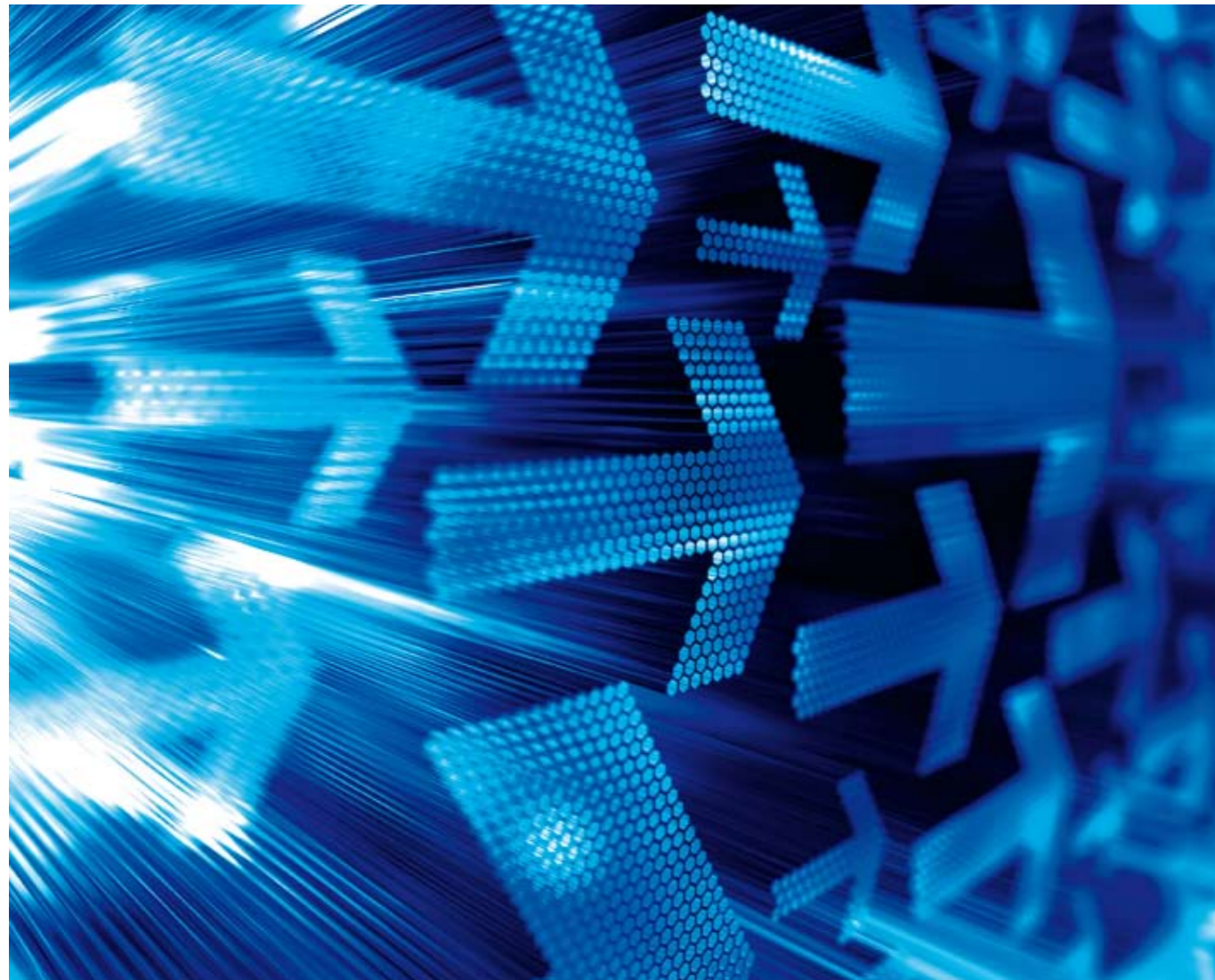
1. **Developing the field of regional studies** for the benefit of the wider community through effective networking at different levels;
2. **Maximising membership and community building** through continued engagement and the delivery of new services;
3. **Knowledge production**; generating new knowledge through funding and supporting Research Networks and Spatial Groups;
4. **Dissemination** through the publication of journals and books, and by organising conferences, seminars, workshops and other events;
5. **Influencing policy debate and practice**, for example by responding to consultations and liaising with appropriate bodies.

Our Development Plan for 2008–13 set out how we intended to do this, and this Mid-Term Review charts progress to date and sets out future challenges over the planning period.

## Key Strategic Priorities: Progress To Date and Remaining Challenges

In 2008, the Association identified seven cross-cutting priorities to cover all areas of our work during the Development Plan period (until 2013) – implicit in all these priorities is our aim to promote the field of regional studies:

- ▶ Maximise membership and community building
- ▶ Develop the field and nurture our effective international networks
- ▶ Increase the Association's contribution to regional research
- ▶ Deliver high-quality and relevant publications
- ▶ Disseminate and debate regional issues and research
- ▶ Enhance our influence on policy debate and practice
- ▶ Use emerging technologies to achieve our goals



## ▶ Maximising membership and community building

The Development Plan's strategic aims were rooted in the belief that we need a membership that is larger in size, more international, more engaged in the work of the Association, more representative of the diverse nature of the regional studies community, and more active. In so doing, we appreciated the challenges and risks, both attitudinal and financial to the membership model in general, and recognised that differentiated services for members would be key in continuing our growth.

Key membership benefits comprise opportunities to:

- Build collaborations
- Develop networks
- Promote research
- Publish
- Debate and influence policy and practice
- Receive our journals and magazines
- Access discounts

### **The Association set 9 targets in this area:**

1. **To nurture collaborative research and debate through the provision of a database of members and institutions** – In 2009 we launched an online Expert Register through the member's portal. All members are asked once a year, as part of the renewal process, to complete and update their data. As members renew over 2010–11, the register will be developed as a rich database. The Register is fully searchable, without charge, by members.
2. **To recognise that different members require different services** – The Association has developed differentiated opportunities for different categories of members. An example is that Early Career members can now publish in a mentored environment within *Regional Insights*. The whole membership learns from their work as everyone receives the publication. We also run an annual Early Career conference open to all but encouraging papers from students and early career researchers in particular. And in late 2010 for the first time we ran a hugely successful early career poster session at the EU Regional Policy Open Days University in association with DG Regio.
3. **Use our existing membership to grow the membership more effectively, especially outside the EU** – Total membership is growing strongly, with 15% growth since the beginning of 2008. Growth in all categories is international. Growth in the early career category is particularly strong.
4. **To develop different membership rates in order to stimulate growth in membership; notably an early career rate, as well as different rates for different geographical areas in the world** – This target has been achieved with growth in early career members of 508% since 2008 and the number of countries represented in membership increasing by 11%. Members in all categories and bands have told us via surveys that they welcome the introduction of territorial membership and it is viewed as promoting both equity and global networking.
5. **To further develop the Regions magazine as the "voice" of the membership, and to use it and the website to increase the membership and awareness of the Association** – *Regions* remains a hugely popular membership benefit and has recently had a front cover 'facelift'. Its editorial team has developed a well received "themed issue" approach to *Regions*, with the added benefit that it now provides income for the Association through its inclusion in the EBSCO database. *Regions* is intensively used in our efforts to seek new members who often join following publishing within it. It is worth noting that our new early career publication, *Regional Insights*, contributes here as well. In addition, the role of the website in growing membership is dealt with below.

6. **To explore professional recognition by the RSA** – The Association has introduced use of the post-nominals MeRSA for members. This post-nominal is automatic on membership and allows all members to see who else is part of our network. We believe that this is valued particularly in emerging markets and we promote its use by all members so that it becomes a recognised affiliation indicating that the individual would have access to up-to-the-minute research results, methodologies and a network of connected and informed individuals.
7. **To offer prizes so as to recognise achievement and increase the profile of the Association** – The Association now offers a range of awards recognising excellence, most recently adding “Best Annual (International) Conference Paper” to the list. Over time we aim to seek further sponsors for the awards from among the Regional Studies Association international network.
8. **To make available travel awards to facilitate networking in the community** – We offer travel awards of up to (currently) £400 which are likely to become popular as they are easy to obtain and can be used to lever additional funding from other parties. Since inception 20 awards have been made. In the light of financial austerity in many countries we are actively promoting this scheme and in late 2010 announced a major new investment programme.
9. **To clarify and improve our Corporate Membership package** – We have created two classes of corporate membership – the open class receives all membership benefits including the right to online access to our publications. We have one closed class containing University Main Libraries who receive all the benefits except online access. They have the right to purchase this at discounted rates from the publisher. We are seeking to grow international corporate membership which is open to departments, faculties, consultancies, government departments, local authorities, regional bodies etc.

**Remaining and new challenges:**

- a. We will offer more personalisation in our member services – tailoring our offer to members.
- b. To grow membership each year through to the end of 2013. This is an aggressive target as most societies are currently facing a contraction of membership. While we can expect to lose some membership (particularly amongst corporate members which are more UK skewed and likely to be hit by public sector cuts) we are confident that we can grow the membership base further.
- c. To improve retention rates by 5% per year until the end of the planning period. This will entail the provision of a personal service to lapsing members and will be an opportunity for us to learn more about membership patterns and the needs of our members.
- d. To engage with new members helping them to maximise value from their membership by informing them of activities likely to be of interest to them.
- e. To promote member entry to the expert register and encourage its use.
- f. To build more productive relationships with our honorary members.

► **Develop the field and nurture our international networks**

The Development Plan set this target in the context of strongly internationalising our activities, engaging with the best researchers and participating in ongoing policy debates around the world. It recognised our strength within Europe and the need to expand our impact in the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Russia, Australasia, India and the Far East. The need to internationalise not only member benefits but also our own governance and organisational structures was noted. In addition the need to grow closer relationships with key international partners was clearly articulated.



**The Association set 6 targets in this area:**

1. **To expand our activities and membership internationally with particular emphasis beyond Europe. To double membership and increase international spread in the ten years from 2008** – The introduction of territorial membership and an early career membership category along with the widening of the conference programme to include non-EU locations are key aspects of this strategy. Other related activities include the use of social networking to reach all parts of our market internationally. *Regional Insights* – a publication written primarily by early career researchers – helps to target the RSA ‘offer’ to different segments of our membership. More take-up of our Travel Award Scheme and Event Support Scheme also contributes here, along with the introduction of an award scheme to recognise excellence, a new logo and a redesigned website with greater international appeal.
2. **To hold conferences and events in key markets internationally** – The Association runs events all over the world. We have our own programme of international conferences and also support events through Research Network funding and the Event Support Scheme. In 2012 we will run our inaugural conference in China. Research Network events in 2010 were held in many countries including Hungary, Poland, Sweden and Australia.
3. **To build vibrant country sections and research networks with international appeal** – The number of country sections is growing. Since the start of our Development Plan we have added NORSA (Norway, Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland) and Russia, and a new French section is being developed. We have supported 28 research networks in the planning period of which 17 have organisers from more than one country. All plan meetings in more than one country.
4. **To review our organisational and governance structures to reflect international growth** – Post review, the Association board is more representative of the international spread of our membership. We have board members from Australia, Singapore, Portugal, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Ireland and the UK and it is intended that this process of internationalising the board and our structures is continued. It should be noted that international spread on the board is balanced with achieving the right mix of disciplinary expertise and other skills. Internationalising our activities is now a pillar stone of our planning process.

5. **To engage more closely with policy and practice particularly within Europe and the UK** – The Association has developed very effective links with the United Nations (where we now hold consultative status), the OECD, the European Commission and relevant government departments in the UK, Ireland and elsewhere in Europe. Deliverables from these links include the running of joint events (such as the *EU Cohesion Policy conference* to be held in March 2011 with the European Commission and the Slovenian Government); representation on policy panels, and invitations to contribute to consultations. Policy engagement and impact are key areas of work for the Association.
6. **To seek collaboration with other societies, universities, academics and networks to fulfil mutually agreeable goals** – The Association works closely with bodies such as the Regional Science Association International (at various levels); the Association of American Geographers (AAG), the American Planning Association (APA), ESPON, the Smith Institute (UK), the Academy of Social Sciences, the Royal Geographical Society and many other organisations. We welcome opportunities to work collaboratively throughout the world on projects as diverse as publishing, consultations, representation and the organisation of conferences and events.

**Remaining and new challenges:**

- a. **Establish a six month staff presence within North America in 2011 to promote the RSA brand** – Further establishing our brand and raising awareness of our membership benefits and international scope, and exploring opportunities for joint working and new events.
- b. **Strengthen the role and contribution of our Country Representatives** – During 2010/11 we will review the role and responsibilities of our 43 Country Representatives to ensure that they are fully supported in their ambassadorial and other duties for the Association. The country representatives network is growing rapidly and we want to encourage more representatives to move towards the establishment of full and active sections.
- c. **Support and liaise with our Country Sections** – We seek to work with our Country Sections more closely and to explore new relationships with them to encourage maximum participation and mutual benefit from growing their memberships.
- d. **Grow the number of Country Sections** – We intend to target key countries with the aim of establishing vibrant sections, thereby strengthening both our international presence but also our ability to represent all scholars and practitioners in the field, irrespective of where they are based.
- e. **Review the Research Network Scheme** – During 2010/11 we will review the Research Network Scheme to ensure that it remains ‘fit for purpose’ given the substantial new investment we are making over 2010–13.
- f. **Promotion of the online Expert Register** – We will promote members’ completion of their Expert Register entries and the active use of this valuable resource. The current emphasis of many funders on international comparative work makes this a key deliverable to our members.

► **Increase the Association’s contribution to regional research**

The Association recognised that while contributing positively to the regional studies research agenda, as well as engaging with members and increasing internationalisation, the Research Network scheme had previously operated exclusively in responsive mode.

The Development Plan therefore established a number of priority themes on which to focus efforts to proactively contribute to building research agendas and growing communities of scholars and practitioners.

**We identified 5 targets in this area:**

1. **To identify and develop a core set of research themes and theme leaders** – The Association is engaged in this process. We have undertaken several consultations with members to establish interest areas and now we are seeking to identify theme leaders with the energy and passion to champion their field. The linkage between research networks and our annual (international) conference was well established by 2009, leading to an increase in the quality of our conference programme and content.
2. **To arrange regular meetings with theme leaders** – Action on this will be progressed during 2011.
3. **To develop new research networks, establishing niche communities within the wider membership** – This has been a naturally occurring process and the extension of the Research Network scheme to allow applications for continued funding has worked well to support this goal.
4. **To develop the contribution of Research Networks to the Association through a web presence, reporting in *Regions* (the members’ magazine), and developing communities and working papers** – We are performing well against this target. Research Network leaders have been particularly active in developing their web presence and in publishing their results in special issues of *Regions*. Research Networks are now a key part of the RSA brand and receive active support (not only financial) from the RSA office.
5. **To develop the RSA website as an access point for members to find out about research themes and networks** – During the Development Plan review the website has been overhauled and re-launched, and navigation has been substantially improved. More remains to be done – see below.

**Remaining and new targets:**

- a. We will seek to build relationships with key thinkers in our field and to engage with them in developing a cutting-edge understanding of regional issues, using a variety of mechanisms including networking, lectures, research networks and much more.
- b. The Association will explore how to move beyond short term network funding and develop longer term ‘commissions’ around emerging research communities.
- c. Development of the research support function of the website. We will build a full content management system for the website, thereby allowing more sophisticated searching of the many hundreds of academic papers and posts on the site. This added searchability will supplement the Expert Register in making it easier for members to identify scholars and practitioners in different fields.

► Deliver high-quality and relevant publications

The Association currently publishes two journals – *Regional Studies* and *Spatial Economic Analysis*; two members' magazines – *Regions* and *Regional Insights* (the latter written substantially by early career members); a book series – *Regions and Cities*; and also publishes conference proceedings from the Winter Conference and abstract books for other events, as well as additional publications including the *Annual Report*. Our publication programme is a key part of our research dissemination effort and will continue to be vigorously supported by the Board and RSA office.

The Development Plan recognised challenges to traditional publishing models both for journals and books but so far both continue to thrive. However, we do need to continue our efforts to monitor and anticipate tipping points for change (e.g. the continuing move of corporate bodies from print to online

subscriptions) and the growing use of e-readers and chapter purchase for book consumption, as well as the continuing growth in the number of new niche journals which could potentially threaten mature journals by taking market share.

The Development Plan set out the aim of maintaining our leading position as the publisher in our field, to regularly review our range of publications and to ensure as wide a dissemination as possible while securing crucial publishing revenue streams and taking account of emerging technologies.

**Achievement and progress against the 9 targets include:**

**The updating of development plans for both journals.** These plans include stretching targets for subscription sales and renewals, impact factors, and other key metrics.

**Maintaining the profile and reputation of our journals.** This includes organising multiple journal lectures; in 2010 the Nobel Laureate, Professor Paul Krugman delivered the Regional Studies Annual Lecture at the AAG in Washington DC. Stefano Breschi (University Bocconi, Italy) gave a subsequent Regional Studies lecture at the RSA Annual Conference in Pécs, Hungary. Fabrizio Barca, author of the influential Barca Report "*An Agenda for a Reformed Cohesion Policy*" delivered the Spatial Economic Analysis Annual Lecture at the ESRA conference in Linköping, Sweden in August 2010.

The Regional Studies two-year impact factor (a key measure of the reach of an academic journal) rose to 1.462 in 2010 and the five-year impact factor rose to 2.610. The average of the two-year impact factor over the last five years is 1.386. We expect *Spatial Economic Analysis* to be awarded an impact factor for 2010.

The Association is generous in its support to editorial teams but also demanding in terms of successful outcomes. We work in close collaboration with editors through the Journals Management Committee so as to ensure the continued success of all our publications.

The Journals Management Committee is currently investigating a number of new ideas for new start journals to enhance the Association's publications portfolio and will continue to welcome suggestions from members and the wider community.

Since the Development Plan period began, the rejuvenated *Regions and Cities* Book Series has thrived, with the publication of 36 books between 1990 and 2008 and since 2008 14 books have been published with a further 14 under contract. The pre-Development Plan annual average number of titles was 2 and since the planning period commenced it is now 8. The book

series has become increasingly influential and attracts 'key name' authors publishing a mix of books from research monographs, through edited volumes to special issue books, with the latter borrowing from successful Association and other journal special issues.

The Association has continued to develop its own in-house publishing series with at least two conference volumes published each year. Increasingly we are working with partners to support the publication of (often) policy relevant volumes in areas we see as especially important. The most recent example of this was "*The Future of Regional Policy*" published jointly by the Association and the Smith Institute in 2009.

**Remaining and new challenges**

- a. We continually monitor key publishing developments, particularly where they might impact on our publications portfolio. We work with our publisher to ensure that our readers benefit from all publishing-related new technologies such as e-books, I-First and web tools for referencing. We plan to roll out further innovations around marketing single articles, online special issues and so on.
- b. We will develop a media strategy for each part of our portfolio so that we proactively maximise the potential impact of all that we publish.
- c. We will renegotiate the head contract for our journals and books so as to secure as much value for the Association as possible.
- d. Enhancing and protecting the reputation and success of our publishing programme is 'mission critical' for us, as this is core to delivering many of the wider aims and objectives set out in this Development Plan.



## ► Disseminate and debate regional issues and research

With the annual international conference now attracting over 600 participants, and the range and number of events increasing dramatically through the Development Plan period, the Association's conference and events programme plays a major role in our strategy of dissemination and debate shaping.

In defining our goals in this area, the Association sought an inclusive approach that made our events more accessible to a wider range of researchers and practitioners. We embedded this approach in nine strategic targets:

1. **To maximise participation in our events by ensuring that they present cutting edge research and practice** – We have attracted leading researchers to our events, and numbers at our events have been at record levels.
2. **To keep event pricing under review to enable access by all communities** – In 2009 the Association extended its territorial pricing strategy to include the Annual International Conference. As a result we have seen much wider international participation in the conference, which has been most welcome. We know from surveys that members in all bands appreciate this attempt to widen access both geographically and across career stages.
3. **To adjust the pattern of our core events** – The Association now holds an Annual Conference (last year in Pécs, Hungary, 2011 in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, and 2012 in Beijing, China); a Winter Conference (normally held in London, UK), an Early Career event and a Policy Conference as core deliverables.
4. **To hold events outside the EU** – The Association is participating in increasing numbers of non-EU events through sessions in other conferences, such as the very successful 'Day of Sessions' at the 2010 AAG Conference in Washington DC, and through our own research network events.
5. **To explore running partnership events** – We have been involved in 7 partnership ventures so far in both 2009 and 2010. Our experience of building strategic alliances with key organisations has been very successful in helping us to reach new markets and to interact with different groups of scholars and practitioners, thereby bringing different insights and understandings to our work. We will aim to take this further, and in 2011 we will also hold a major conference in Slovenia in cooperation with DG Regio on EU Cohesion Policy.
6. **To establish clear bursary and other support schemes** – This has been achieved. We now offer three schemes for support:
  - The conference bursary – this takes the form of a free conference place to our Annual International Conference;
  - The Event Support Scheme – where we will make a financial donation and provide in-kind support (such as marketing and advertising) to non-RSA organised events with a regional theme;
  - The travel award to attend non-RSA organised events.

In addition, we also offer additional ad hoc conference support on a case-by-case basis where we can establish clear benefit for the Association in pursuing its strategic goals. In making these awards we set out clear application procedures and criteria, and make strenuous efforts to be both transparent and equitable.

7. **To integrate research themes and networks into our conferences** – This is now routine practice and has helped our networks disseminate findings and has raised their profile amongst our membership.

8. **To explore different formats for our meetings** – The Association holds regular annual lectures for both Regional Studies and Spatial Economic Analysis, hosts many meetings under the auspices of its research networks, and has high profile policy events – often in partnership with other organisations such as the recent Regional Policy seminar hosted in the Palace of Westminster, UK, in conjunction with the Smith Institute.
9. **To introduce an annual President's Lunch** – This annual event celebrates our members' achievements through our annual awards of excellence. Each event has been oversubscribed. Speakers have included Professor Sir Peter Hall (the RSA President) at the inaugural event in the House of Commons, UK in 2008, Dr. Alan Gillespie (Chair, ESRC, UK) in the House of Lords, UK in 2009, and Professor John Bachtler (EPRC, UK) at the Ritz Hotel, London.

### **Remaining or new challenges:**

- a. The Association seeks to hold more events outside of Europe, for example by holding a major Annual Conference in China in 2012 and an RSA organised event in North America in 2013. We will continue to participate wherever possible in partnership events and research networks outside the EU.
- b. The Association will seek to involve other organisations where appropriate in our conferences and events so as to achieve mutually agreeable goals, where possible linking with existing and new knowledge exchange partners (such as the United Nations, OECD, the European Commission).
- c. We will seek to ensure maximum impact for our events by promoting the publication of papers presented, and by ensuring media engagement.
- d. To explore possibilities for an RSA Summer School for early career and student categories of membership.
- e. To identify theme champions in 2011 who will write and deliver development plans for the Association's key research priority themes. In its research strategy, the Association wishes to be both proactive in shaping themes and reactive to the emerging issues in our field.

## ► Enhance our influence on policy debate and practice

The Association seeks to grow its existing influence on policy and practice and in particular to: grow this internationally aiming to promote the use of regional studies research; to provide informed opinion; to engage with the media to ensure that views from the RSA community are represented and that information is readily available; and to encourage the engagement of our country sections in these debates.

The Association sought to:

1. **Work with third parties to organise joint activities and respond to public consultation**  
– We have a growing range of formal and informal relationships with other bodies. These range from the United Nations at which we now have consultative status, the European Commission (in particular DG Regio), the OECD, international learned societies such as the Regional Science Association International (including their supranational bodies and country sections), through to umbrella bodies such as the Academy of Social Sciences, and specialist societies such as the Association of American Geographers, the American Planning Association, the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Economic Society. Such relationships also include policy bodies such as the Smith Institute and the European Urban Knowledge Network, and government departments – such as the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in the UK.

### **Remaining and new challenges:**

- a. To improve the effectiveness of our contributions in the policy arena – we accept that it is always possible to do more in this area. We continue to make detailed and evidence based responses to consultations at both national and international levels and to engage with the policy and practice communities through a wide range of events and meetings. Notable recent successes include our involvements in the DG Regio Open Days university; the joint organisation with the European Commission and Slovenian Government of the first academic and policy conference following publication of the Fifth Cohesion Report which is planned for March 2011 and our inclusion in high level government debates about the funding threat to social science in the UK.
- b. To develop the role of Knowledge Exchange Ambassadors to further the Association's key partnerships in this area.
- c. We will seek to strengthen the board's oversight in these areas by making additional board appointments to (a) manage our knowledge transfer programme and (b) coordinate our consultation engagement activities.
- d. To develop a communications strategy – during 2010 the Association hosted a postgraduate student intern to undertake a detailed review of our activities in this area. The key lessons from this work will be built into a communications strategy to assist and coordinate our work for maximum effectiveness and impact.

## ► Use emerging technologies to achieve our goals

In its Development Plan, the Association recognised the importance of using all available technologies to promote its activities and support its members and the wider public. In the last two years our website has been completely redesigned and has a whole new look with better navigation and search facilities. We set five targets in this area and have achieved all of these and more:

1. **Open a members' only portal with password protection** – This is now in place with added benefits coming to the members' lounge as they become available. Members can renew their membership and manage their membership preferences via the lounge.
2. **Place submitted papers and conference volumes in a members' library** – This has been achieved.
3. **Enable and encourage member experimentation on the website** – We are now engaged in social networking through Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, and recently started an RSA Blog. We have also introduced a weekly e-bulletin which has been welcomed by members who frequently request the insertion of news items within them.
4. **Include outputs from the Research Networks on the website** – Each Research Network, Section, Branch and Country Representative has an area on the Association's website. Activity in these spaces varies but where organisers are active the pages are well visited.
5. **Build an expert register** – This is now available and will grow as members renew online. We encourage members to update their details so as to make the register as useful as possible to fellow members. To prevent the register becoming dated, the portal links to individual and institutional websites, and updating by members should take only a few minutes each year. The search criteria are flexible and effective.

### **New challenges:**

- a. To develop a content management system to improve key word searching across the website – this is to be achieved during 2011.
- b. To build the number of communications through our social media and to increase our numbers of followers and contributors.
- c. To build e-communication clearly into the heart of the Communications Strategy.
- d. To maximise the use of new web tools such as widgets to allow book browsing, reference management tools and so on.
- e. To increase traffic through the membership portal through the use of publication releases and special offers so that members benefit from the materials in this area.
- f. The Association will also explore if e-technology can help us to reduce our carbon footprint, for example by offering the chance to drop print copies of journals and through increased promotion of our e-books.

## Governance and Management

The Association is grateful to its staff team for their work in delivering on the Development Plan over 2008–2010. We recognise that to achieve our mission and meet environmental challenges going forward we need to be strategic in our approach to maximise market opportunities and develop the full potential of revenue streams. This will require making full use of the talents and experience of our Chief Executive and our staff team, members of the Board and our key committees – the Journals Management Committee, the Executive Committee, the Conference and Events Committee, the Research Network Committee and the Foresight Committee.

The Association has put in place an effective governance structure that is increasingly representative of the full diversity of the membership. For example, the membership has elected a board with an appropriate breadth and depth of experience, covering a range of fields and representing different geographical areas. The board plans for timely and effective succession so that there is no loss of momentum in delivery of our strategic goals. In particular the Association's Board wishes to ensure appropriate geographical coverage to include two clear current omissions – North America and Africa.

In addition, we have used staff expansion and replacement opportunities to employ new staff with enhanced qualifications for their role.

## Finances

The Association sets an annual budget at Board each year and this exercise includes a review of forward expenditure and income patterns. The budget is reviewed regularly against performance during the year. Connected to the budget, the Board also monitors performance against the Development Plan and has a detailed Risk Register which is also frequently updated.

### Corporate Responsibility

The Association seeks to reduce its carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions and the Board receives an annual report addressing this. We encourage the use of public transport by our staff and board members as well as the wider membership. We have recently introduced the *Bike to Work Scheme* to the office and the Chief Executive is now "on her bike!". Related activities include attempts to reduce our use of water, to reduce waste generation, and to recycle when possible. We seek to work with suppliers who are similarly sensitive to environmental concerns in business. In addition, two staff members travelled to the 2010 International Conference in Pécs by train rather than air as part of our efforts to be more sustainable in what we do.

### Resource Plan

The Association recognises the need to plan the resource base for delivery of the Development Plan targets and this includes staffing, facilities, technology and new media.

It should be noted that since the commencement of the planning period the office has expanded to incorporate the role of the Development Manager, appointed to free up some time for the Chief Executive to devote to strategic development of the Association, as well as a half time conference and membership officer to strengthen our team in this area in the light of increasing levels of activity. It is also worth noting that further expansion will take place when the RSA Office presence in North America comes on stream.

The Association moved in 2007 to new offices in Seaford, UK and these remain fit for purpose with some (limited) room for further expansion of our activities.

## Your Feedback

### Please tell us what you think!

Have we covered everything that you expected to see in this report and forward look? Are we missing any crucial ideas or opportunities? Please let us have your views on this mid-term review of our Development Plan. An Association must be driven by its members and we encourage you to be active in shaping our strategic goals.

### Please give your feedback in the following ways:

- **In person to any member of the Board or staff team** – we will be at events wearing RSA blue armbands.
- **By email to the Chief Executive** – Sally Hardy – [sally.hardy@rsa-ls.ac.uk](mailto:sally.hardy@rsa-ls.ac.uk)
- **By email to the Chair** – David Bailey – [david.bailey@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:david.bailey@coventry.ac.uk)
- **Via our website** – [www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk](http://www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk) see the 'contact us' link on the home page.
- **By telephone to the RSA office** – +44 (0)1323 899 698
- **By letter to – Regional Studies Association**  
PO Box 2058  
Seaford BN25 4QU  
United Kingdom

We look forward to hearing from you,



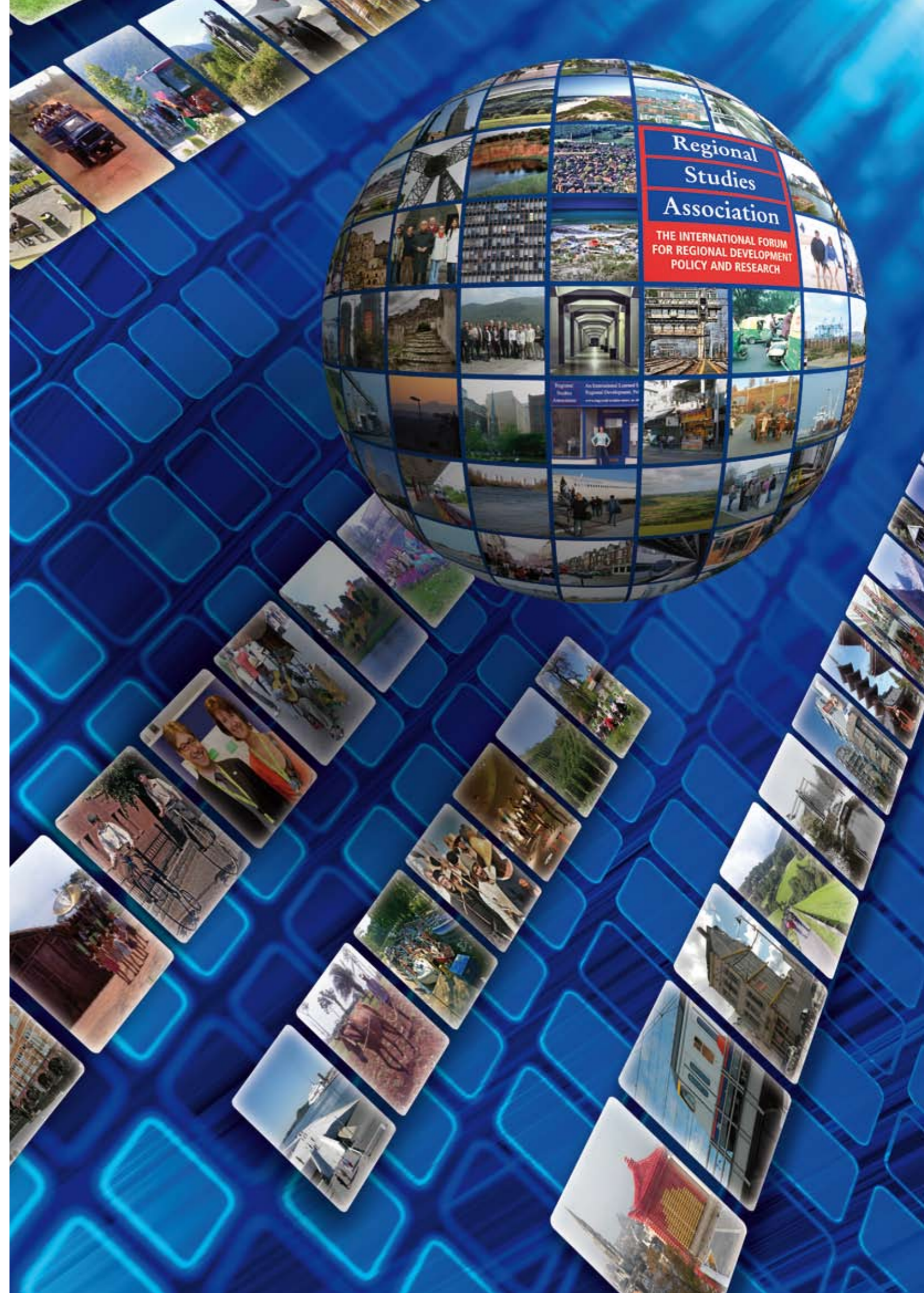
**Professor David Bailey**  
Chair



**Sally Hardy**  
Chief Executive



Your Notes





**Regional  
Studies  
Association**

**THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM  
FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
POLICY AND RESEARCH**

*The Association welcomes as  
members all individuals and  
organisations who are interested  
in the study and understanding  
of regions and regionalism*

Regional Studies Association, PO BOX 2058, Seaford, BN25 4QU, United Kingdom

Telephone: 0044 (0)1323 899 698 Facsimile: 0044 (0)1323 899 798  
Email: [info@rsa-ls.ac.uk](mailto:info@rsa-ls.ac.uk) Web: [www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk](http://www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk)

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