



Regional

Studies

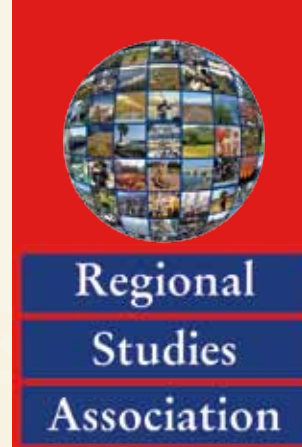
Association



Regional Studies Association  
Development Plan  
2015-2020



# Regional Studies Association Development Plan 2015-2020



## Index

Preface .....	Page 2
Introduction.....	Page 3
Overview .....	Page 3
Values .....	Page 3
Excellence .....	Page 3
Independence .....	Page 4
Impact .....	Page 4
Leadership and Collaboration.....	Page 4
Our Strategy .....	Page 4
Areas of Challenge .....	Page 5
Areas of Engagement .....	Page 5
The Strategic Priorities .....	Page 6
Research .....	Page 6
The RSA Inquiry .....	Page 7
RSA 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary .....	Page 9
Publications .....	Page 9
Conferences and Events .....	Page 12
Membership and Community Building .....	Page 14
RSA Travel Grants .....	Page 14
RSA Event Support Scheme .....	Page 15
Territorial Networks .....	Page 18
Policy and Knowledge Exchange .....	Page 20
Technology and Communications .....	Page 22
RSA Management .....	Page 23
Finances .....	Page 24
Your Feedback .....	Page 24

## Preface

This Development Plan is the most recent version of a sequence of similar documents that have been used by the Regional Studies Association for more than two decades to plan its work. It is the culmination of a large number of meetings and consultations within the Association's Board and Committees with its staff team, its members and with important external stakeholders. We have taken care to be even handed in our consultations across disciplines and territories and generally to reflect the diversity of our membership. We would like to acknowledge our gratitude to all those who reflected upon, commented and in other ways supported the writing of this plan.

The fields of regional studies and regional science are responding to global challenges and as an Association we continue to set high standards for ourselves. The critical needs to address issues of growth and rebalancing weigh heavily, as do issues of sustainable development, the management of geopolitical change and increasing urbanisation. These challenges arise alongside important questions of equity and equality. In this plan we seek to push ourselves and our community to face these global questions and to add to our knowledge and understanding of how the world works and responds to shocks at different scales and in different places.

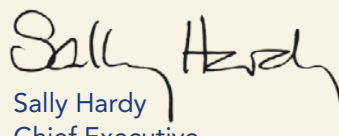
There is a continued need for the Association to support its members and the wider community and we seek to fulfil that mission through our research programme, our conferences and events, our publishing portfolio - which continues to expand and importantly through our knowledge exchange activities.

This document must acknowledge the passing, in Summer 2014, of the Association's pioneering and charismatic President – Professor Sir Peter Hall. Peter was a founder member of the Association in 1964 and has remained a member throughout the intervening period. He was an active member and a probing, ambitious President. He pushed us to push ourselves while being supportive, engaged, willing to help and quietly, we think, was pleased to see his fledgling creation survive its growing pains through to relative maturity.

In 2015, the Association celebrates its 50th anniversary. The world has changed much in the past half century but many of the challenges that so taxed Sir Peter Hall and his contemporaries remain today. Our work is not done. We thank you for reading this document and hope that you, the reader, will see the value of this prospectus in mapping the future priorities for the Association, its Board and staff team. We also hope that you will give us feedback on what you read. We would welcome your views as an Association can only be as good as its community is active and engaged.



Andrew Beer  
Chair  
Regional Studies Association



Sally Hardy  
Chief Executive  
Regional Studies Association

## Introduction

Regions are a key spatial scale for examining the nature and impacts of political, economic, social and environmental change.

The Regional Studies Association works with its international membership to facilitate the highest standards of theoretical development, empirical analysis and policy debate of issues at this sub-national scale. It incorporates both urban and rural economies, as well as varied conceptions of space, such as city-regions and interstitial spaces. We are, for example, interested in issues of economic development and growth, environmental planning, conceptions of territory and its governance and the thorny problems of equity and injustice.

This document serves two purposes – it defines those issues that the RSA Board considers to be the Association’s primary achievements in the last planning period (2008 – 2013) and it sets out the priorities for development in the coming five years. Experience shows that some flexibility may be needed in the interpretation and implementation of policy as circumstances change, but the Board is committed to the continuation of development planning. The views of major stakeholders and the membership of the Association (both of which contributed to this document in breadth and depth) have been incorporated into this final project.

## Overview

The Regional Studies Association was established in 1964 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 Association’s vision is to be the authoritative voice of, and global network for, academics, students, practitioners and policy makers in the study and understanding of cities, regions and regionalism.

The aims of the Association are to:

- Lead the research, policy and practice communities working on regional issues
- Develop our members and support our community

- Deliver high quality regional research
- Influence policy debate and practice
- Innovate in publishing
- Acknowledge excellence in our field

## Values

In achieving its aims, the Association will aim to adhere to its values and a community which is also leading and impactful.

## Excellence

As an Association, we seek excellence in all our activities and in this plan will seek to build upon and strengthen our already robust reputation.

We operate in a complex and multifaceted environment encompassing researchers in many disciplines but particularly geography, economics, political science and planning and across several sectors – higher education, policy and practice.

We are interested not only in empirical work but also in the development of theory and practice and the exchange of this knowledge with others working at the regional level.

The Association publishes a range of journals, a book series and a members' magazine. These outlets hold excellence as their key criteria. This is sought through the professional management of the publications, the choice of publishing partner (Taylor and Francis since 1992), adherence to best practice in publishing practices such as appropriate peer review and use of COPE guidelines on publishing ethics. The Association seeks the best qualified editorial teams and provides resources to enable them to fulfil their role. It offers a range of publishing outlets recognising the need for choice and variability for example, *Regional Studies*, *Regional Science* offers an open access and online only route to publication accepting unconventional articles, regional graphics and offering early career mentoring.

The Association adheres to excellence as the key criteria for all grants but bursaries also recognise career stage and the challenges individuals may face in securing funding.

Excellence is a cornerstone of the services provided by the office team to the membership and wider community. The Association is run by its members for its members, this mission is supported by an enthusiastic and expert team of individuals with varied backgrounds and interests.

## Independence

The Association is independent. It is established as a charitable company limited by guarantee in England and Wales. It is run by a Board of up to 12 trustees/directors who are elected by the membership and they are assisted by a variable number of appointed trustee/directors. The Board is supported by a number of Committees and by a staff team led by the CEO based at our main office in Seaford, UK. The Association also currently has a presence in Beijing through a funded project office.

The Association has a number of memberships with umbrella bodies such as the Academy of Social Sciences and, the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers

but has no political affiliations or loyalties. The independence of the Association is strongly valued by its members enabling the Association to speak across the career stages of members, across disciplines, sectors and across institutions.

## Impact

Part of the Association's charitable responsibility is to seek public benefit from its work. This is taken seriously and knowledge exchange activity is a valued benefit of membership. Not all activities can have immediate impact but the Association seeks to disseminate knowledge, to promulgate debate and to engage with relevant partners globally using all appropriate methods.

## Leadership and Collaboration

The Regional Studies Association leads in its field. It works to support regional research and to promote education and understanding of regional issues. In achieving this, the Association collaborates with many interested bodies and individuals. Work at the international level is particularly important with partners such as DG Regio (European Commission), Committee of the Regions, OECD, World Bank, UN Habitat and UN but we also work with national bodies such as the Smith Institute and the UK Academy of Social Science. There is a strong interest in and commitment to comparative work recognising that mixed models and learning from other situations can intelligently inform decision making. The Association seeks to identify areas of research need and to encourage and facilitate engagement in those areas through building communities of knowledge and practice and in some cases through direct funding support.

## Our Strategy

The Association is driven by its ambition to grow and support its academic field and also to thrive in its role as a learned society. A healthy and active Association will better advance the interests of its membership and the field in general.

As a result the Association is seeking to address activity in five areas – leading and serving its

increasingly diverse and global community; growing and supporting RSA membership; responding to new publishing paradigms; building (and financing) its knowledge exchange activities, and finally, keeping pace with changes and transitions in the international higher education community. As a consequence of this latter change, the role of learned societies is changing and new values and modes of practice need to be established across the sector.

The global economy is slowly recovering from the 2008 crisis and this process has triggered new questions and lines of inquiry by researchers. The Association is committed to providing leadership on a number of dimensions of these responses.

## Areas of Challenge

The notion of “region” is evolving and the Association must work to embrace new conceptions of territory and spatiality and embed them into how it thinks and works.

The Board has identified seven themes which it believes are critical for the future of regions and these themes inform its decisions as the Association seeks to engage with and reshape policy and public debate. These themes, for example, will inform future conference themes and the Regional Inquiry. The Association will, however, remain responsive to the emerging ideas put forward by researchers in its grant schemes and research networks.

The Association is heterodox in its approach to research and this is reflected in the range of approaches taken in published articles. We welcome work from different traditions including qualitative and quantitative contributions. The introduction of our new journal, **Area Development and Policy** in 2016 will help articles following non-Western traditions to find a home within the Association.

Our seven key themes are:

### 1. Sustainable Cities and Regions

- *urban and regional sustainability, risk management, low carbon and climate mitigation strategies, food, water, energy and environment and environmental resilience*

### 2. Spatial Theory and Methods

- *urban and regional theories, methodology, value change (including big and open data), visualization, spatial economic analysis*

### 3. Territory, Politics and Governance

- *territorial politics, governance, institutions, regionalism and regionalisation, city region building and metropolitan politics, devolution and localism*

### 4. Regional and Urban Economies

- *innovation, evolution, economic resilience, clusters, creativity, competitiveness, labour markets, work and welfare, migration, firms, sectors, global production networks and value chains*

### 5. Spatial Planning

- *cities and city regions, strategic spatial planning, housing, transport, infrastructure and the built environment, place making approaches*

### 6. Regional and Urban Policy

- *cohesion, leadership, governance, public management, policy formulation and evaluation, place based approaches, smart cities and regions, urbanization and regional development*

### 7. Sub-national identities and well being

- *citizenship, culture, identity, lived differences, social capital, ageing, demography, community and wellbeing*

In supporting research and enquiry into these seven areas the Association seeks to engage with researchers and practitioners in differing parts of the world to ensure that lessons can be learnt from and between territories.

## Areas of Engagement

### Sectors

The Association seeks a global footprint. It will concentrate on growth in China, North and Latin America and Eastern Europe in the next five year planning period – it values what can be learnt from comparative work. It recognises that work conventionally labelled either regional science or regional studies are at root just variations on a common interest in regional knowledge inquiry. **Regional Studies, Regional Science** – its new open access journal reflects this new commitment to spanning disciplinary boundaries and we will continue to engage closely with workers in a number of fields.

The Association will also seek to build relationships into related fields including urban studies, political science and planning. As part of this commitment we will reach out to societies working in these areas. The Association aspires to be multi and inter-disciplinary in its approach.

The Association continues to strive to have an impact on policy in order to generate for public benefit. In particular it seeks to work at a number of levels as a partner with organisations such as Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG Regio) as well as other relevant DGs such as Research and Innovation and Education and Culture (European Commission); Committee of the Regions; OECD; World Bank; United Nations; and UN-Habitat. The Association recognises that managing a diverse community of interests is complex and will require innovation and compromise.

### **Within our Membership**

The Association will continue to work to support and encourage the work of its members and to recognise their varying career stages, different geographical locations and the advantages and challenges that this can bring. It will seek as far as possible to be inclusive in its organisation of activities taking into account varying abilities to pay.

The Association will offer a trans-disciplinary platform of engagement for academics regardless of seniority, policy makers and practitioners. The Association has a specific goal of encouraging early career researchers and post graduate students. It undertakes to consult and inform its members using all reasonable means in order to build a community of knowledge and practice and to better enable the Association to act as a voice for the sector.

### **What will we deliver?**

- Leadership on the key questions for the field, including projects addressing these challenges
- A better understanding of what regional studies and science means in different territories to facilitate better comparative and cooperative working and efforts to link across disciplines to involve all relevant thinkers on regional issues
- Policy engagement that generates public benefit from the work of our members and community
- Exciting and innovative networking opportunities including global conferences and events
- A high quality and flexible publishing programme

- A funded research programme responding to the needs of all categories of membership with appropriate funding, clear and transparent criteria for support and a strong commitment to dissemination of the findings
- The reward of excellence in our fields
- The development of our territorial networks to better serve members
- Further support for students and early career researchers

## **The Strategic Priorities**

To address its strategic challenges the Association will make choices and planned investments to build on existing strengths and to work in new areas through its core activities.

### **Research**

The Association's choice of seven priority research areas recognise the effects of the 2008 economic crisis, voices on climate change, the geo-political shifts that have generated global uncertainty, as well as other concerns including demography, migration, health and well being, unequal development, education and skills training and the nurturing of sustainable development.

The Association will work in two ways to support its research ambitions. We will assist our members to network, to access the best research, to publish and to disseminate their research. We will also directly commission research through a number of schemes.

The Association has recognised the following challenges in the area of research

- One effect of the financial crisis from 2008 was to reduce the volume of research funding available, especially for early career researchers
- Tightened funding in higher education combined with a tendency to concentrate on large grants by grant awarding bodies meant that micro and small grants to kick start larger projects are hard to find, even for established researchers

- There remains the need for funding that is geographically untethered to support international networking on narrow themes to build communities of interest, and develop thinking and understanding
- The tightening of funding available for researchers at all levels to attend conferences and events
- The changing publishing paradigm because of global policy interest in open access

## Achievements

- The Association works with leading thinkers and researchers across its disciplinary breadth. It engages with them in a number of ways – through invitations to speak, positions on committees, through project work such as event organisation, editorships and editorial boards
- Funding was given to 33 research networks from 2008 to 2014 when 12 were active. This represented a financial commitment of £99,000. Most of the 104 network leaders were based in Europe with some presence in the USA and Australia. Over 70 meetings were held in more than 25 countries, with well over 1,500 participants
- The RSA is committed to increasing research engagement - of the money committed to research networks c.50% was spent on bursaries to assist attendance at their conferences and events
- Since 2011 the RSA has invested £260,000 in 26 Early Career Research Grants of up to £10,000 each. Grant holders have been internationally located – Germany, Ireland, Sweden, USA and China. This research is spread throughout the social sciences including Geography, Economics, Management and Business Studies, Planning, Political Science and Sociology
- The Association is committed to stronger dissemination of research – our own and other research. To this end a fully searchable content management system is now in place on the website and the landing pages alone for RSA research networks and research grants have attracted over 7,000 hits in the last 12 months to January 2015

## Research Network Survey Results

- 94% of respondents said their involvement with an RSA research network led to new networks
- 69% said it led to a publication for them
- 50% said it led to working directly with colleagues met during the event
- 32% said it led to the publication of a book

## RSA Research Network on Leadership and Urban and Regional Development

The purpose of this research network was to build on existing contacts between earlier RSA Research Networks (Place leadership, Sotarauta *et al*; Citizen driven and collective leadership, Liddle *et al*; Leadership in Euro peripheries, Sirak *et al* and Networked leadership and innovation, Sotarauta *et al*) to create greater understanding, develop further joint publications, and build future research potential and through this to develop common theoretical, conceptual and methodological frameworks.

This Research Network organised events with international audiences in the UK, Finland, the Netherlands as well as the Czech Republic, Belgium and Australia and will run further events in the future. For this rolling RSA funding has been critical to the health of this vibrant network.

## Priorities for 2015 - 2020

- The Association will launch two new research grant schemes – one for mid-career researchers (RSA Membership Research Grant - £5,000) and one for established researchers (RSA Fellowship Research Grant - £7,500). These small grant schemes are designed to offer support for a discrete piece of research. Funding will be provided in a flexible way, permitting teaching buy out, research assistance, data purchase, travel and subsistence. It can also include an Article Processing Charge when any resultant publications go to **Regional Studies, Regional Science**
- The Early Career Grant scheme will continue to be promoted and we will continue to attract high quality applicants from emerging areas particularly those where the RSA is establishing a presence



- As the first Early Career grants are fulfilled, we will disseminate the research results and assist the researchers in promoting the potential impacts of their work
- The Research Network format has been reviewed and revised. It has allocated a greater sum of money (up to £10,000 per Research Network) to funding rounds in 2015 and 2016 and seeks a balance between policy and theoretical foci. The networks will carefully be selected, seeking those with international leadership.
- We will set a resource envelope for the planning period and agree how funding is divided between schemes. Consideration will be given to ring-fenced funding for target geographical areas to encourage the development of comparative research
- The Research Committee will be innovative while continuing to ensure the effective expenditure of the research budget. For example it will fund a second collaborative PhD addressing questions around knowledge, publishing and regional studies and regional science

### ***RSA Early Career Grant: 'It's hard everywhere, but this place is different': regional differences in non-standard work in the UK – Dr Kendra Strauss, Simon Fraser University, Canada***

This project was supported as a pilot using a mixed-methods approach to investigate non-standard work and labour intermediaries, from the perspective of workers in different regions of the UK. It used existing data sources, in particular the Labour Force Survey (LFS), in conjunction with a commissioned nationally representative survey of workers in UK regions, as well interviews with policy makers, third sector groups and unions. The project has shed light on patterns of labour market change since the 2008. In particular, it sought to explore the robustness of Britain's employment relative to the levels of joblessness experienced by other EU member states and how that can be understood in the context of uneven geographies of crisis and recovery.

*"The Regional Studies Association Early Career grant scheme provides opportunities both to gain experience of being a principal investigator, and to explore emerging themes — in my case regional differences in non-standard work in the UK — as part of the establishment of a longer term research agenda. Both are invaluable for developing a career in research."* Dr Kendra Strauss

The project allowed the principal investigator to publish articles and e-articles and she moved from University of Cambridge, UK to the Simon Fraser University, Canada to further her career.

## **The RSA Inquiry**

The Association will lead and shape the research, policy and practice environment in the future while also responding to changing economic, social and environmental conditions. This multi-disciplinary activity will form part of the celebration of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary by making a clear contribution to the fields of regional studies and regional science, as well as social science globally. It is intended that this Inquiry be independent and addresses key questions of growth and rebalancing. It will be funded from the reserves of the Association.

The topic of the Inquiry will be announced at the Association's Annual Conference "Global Growth Agendas: Regions, Institutions and Sustainability" in Piacenza, Italy in May 2015.

Led by a small steering group, the Inquiry will draw on key international figures for assistance in addressing the core questions. A key focus will be tapping into the knowledge and understanding across all those active in regional research, policy and practice across the developed and developing world. It will use a range of methods including member and non-member surveys and questionnaires, focus groups at international events, online discussion forums and commissioning of research across the RSA grant schemes and via Research Networks.

Particular effort will be given to the effective dissemination of the findings and recommendations of the Inquiry throughout its operation to inform and influence policy decision making.

## **RSA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Association celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 2015. The celebration will take many forms

including, as noted above the establishment of an inquiry contributing to the development and understanding of regional studies and regional science. The Association will publish a history of the impact of the Association authored by Dr James Hopkins whose PhD was co-funded by the RSA and by the Economic and Social Research Council, the UK Government's Social Science funding council. We will also publish a pamphlet for the members and wider community on the history of the RSA. In addition, the Association's website will include a timeline of our development noting important dates and events.

Two new grant schemes have been announced – for mid-career members (MeRSA) and for established career members (FeRSA). The Association will celebrate at each of its major events during the year but in particular at its President's Event in November in London 2015.

Finally, the Research Network Scheme will be re-launched with additional funding.



## Publications

The Association seeks to achieve excellence in all its publications and to support its journals, books series and magazine as they evolve, responding to the changing demands of the regional studies and regional science communities. The Association recognises the challenge that shifts in the publishing paradigm towards Open Access publishing present generates both challenges and opportunities. In response we will seek to both educate and inform the academic community about the choices, in addition we will realign our own publishing portfolio (e.g. the Association's journals are now all hybrid with the exception of **Regional Studies**, **Regional Science** which is fully gold) and will address the potential tightening of future publishing income streams by building resilience into budgetary planning. The Association commissions special academic pieces to highlight areas of importance in the field, especially where identified as research priorities in this document. Commissioned pieces will be subject to the normal standards of excellence and subject peer review.

*Achievements 2008-2013*

### **Portfolio of RSA Publications**

In the period 2008-2013, the Association added three new publications to its portfolio:

- 1 **Regional Studies**, **Regional Science**, is an online only, gold Open Access journal launched in late 2013. The journal publishes on regional issues in economics, geography, planning, political science and related fields. With streamlined peer-review, the journal accommodates research articles, shorter policy briefings and a new 'regional graphics' section, reflecting the growing importance of data visualisation. The journal adheres to expected standards of excellence and research rigour. It responds to the paradigm shift towards Open Access publishing
- 2 The journal **Territory, Politics, Governance** began in 2013 and has moved to a quarterly format from 2015. It is a new interdisciplinary journal from the Regional Studies Association. It is committed to the development of theory and research in territorial politics and the governance of space. This journal creates a platform on which to explore the interface between territory, politics, economy, identity and the organisation of political space. It confronts topical and emergent issues of world economic and political concern

Other achievements include:

- A change in editorial model for **Regional Studies** from a geographically unified team to a more internationally dispersed set of colleagues working on individual contracts, thus avoiding whole team changeover in the future. We have retained a collective decision making model. An increase in publishing frequency from 9 issues per annual volume in 2007 to 12 in 2014
- The inclusion of **Spatial Economic Analysis** within the Web of Science to gain an impact factor and the shift from 2 issues per year to quarterly publication
- The introduction of early career editors to its journals. These mentored roles have proved hugely popular both within the community and within the editorial teams

- **Regional Insights** was a magazine aimed at early career researchers launched in 2010 and which in 2014 became a section within the new journal **Regional Studies, Regional Science**. **Regional Insights** in both incarnations was designed to make research findings from early career researchers more accessible to a wider audience. Complementing the Association's existing publications, it continues to offer a mentoring service to early career authors helping them to shape their research into a paper which will engage and inform readers drawn from across academia, policy-makers and practitioners in the field of regional studies and regional science
- A marked strengthening of the brand and reputation of the **Regions and Cities** Book Series which now publishes 14 books a year as compared with 4 books in 2007. The series has published 106 books since 2008
- When comparing the number of books sold between the periods 2003-2007 and 2008-2013, there has been growth of more than 200%
- In 2008 the member benefits were enhanced by the addition of e-access to 8 journals and in 2014 this list was expanded to 16 including **Regional & Federal Studies**; **Space and Polity**; **Policy Studies**; **City and Urban Policy and Research**.
- An expansion of the philanthropic schemes to which the Association's publications belong – **Research4Life** incorporating **HINARI**, **AGORA**, **OARE** and **aRDI**; **INASP** and the **Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERii)**; **The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL)**; **The Association of Commonwealth Universities Low Cost Journals Scheme**; **Journal Donation Project (JDP)**; **Special Terms for Authors & Researchers (STAR)** which assists individual authors from emerging regions; **AuthorAID** which provides mentoring for authors in emerging regions

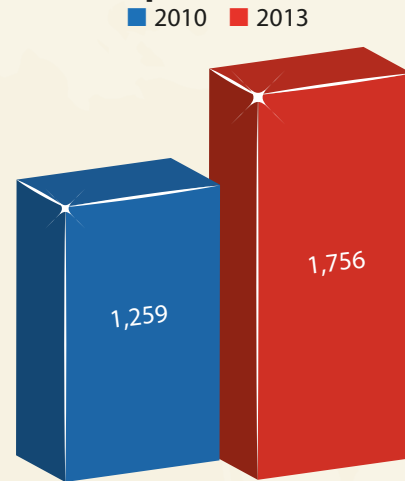
### *Priorities for 2015 - 2020*

- A new journal will be launched in 2016 called **Area Development and Policy**. This will focus on area development and policy at different scales, in particular in Brazil, Russia, India and China. This new journal will recognise (as Li Keqiang, Chinese Premier, did in his speech at Davos, 2015) that "cultural diversity is a treasure". It will be multidisciplinary with economic geography and applied economics prominent. It will publish authors from different writing traditions including non-Western interpretations of development and will be sensitive to geographical and contextual differences
- **Regional Studies** will continue to publish core, high quality articles and special issues, commissioned articles and editorials. Commissioned editorials may link to Association events including the **RSA Inquiry**
- **Territory, Politics, Governance** at the time of writing is under consideration for inclusion in the **Web of Science** leading to an impact factor. It will continue to grow its reputation through strong editorship, the careful choice of special issues and high profile speakers for its series of annual lectures
- **Spatial Economic Analysis** will continue to publish high quality papers and seek special issues on key topics
- **Regional Studies, Regional Science** will establish its reputation as the leading gold Open Access journal in the field and will publish submitted papers while also commissioning articles and commentaries. The journal will offer a rapid route to publication across regional studies and science. It will continue to embrace change and will be responsive to best practice developments in gold Open Access publishing
- **Regions**, the members' magazine, will continue to be the voice of the Association membership and will remain a flexible publication responding to needs
- **Regions and Cities** Book Series will continue to be nurtured as a key series for the Association. The series will

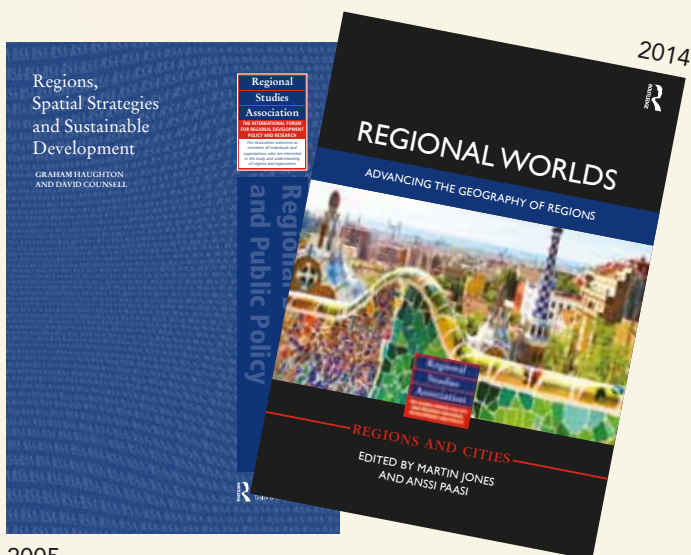
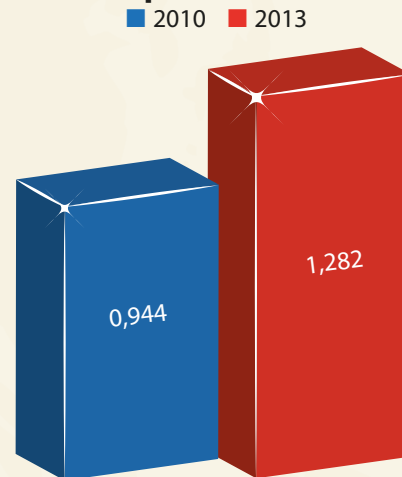
continue to respond both to offered manuscripts and commissioned works

- The Association will continue to work with and support its large team of editors (43), associate editors (46) and editorial advisory board members (107) both through the provision of appropriate administrative support, institutional support through the RSA Publications Committee, Board and office team and through the provision of advice and technical assistance
- The role of referees in the publishing portfolio will continue to be recognised and celebrated (well over 5,000 referees contributed between 2008 -2014 based on annual counts)
- The relationship with the Association’s publisher (Taylor and Francis) will continue to be developed particularly in relation to publishing innovation
- The Association will continue to consider where new publications might contribute to the development both of the Association and the field
- Efforts will be made to provide additional resources to allow for some commissioning of papers or organisation of publication events
- The Association will continue to contribute to the debates on the changing world of academic publishing – both in journals and monographs
- Continue to appreciate and concentrate on the importance of communicating with both the Association’s members and the wider community
- Be aware of the need to plan for timely and smooth succession of editors, editorial teams and staff members
- Seek to fulfil the desire of some members to receive on online copies of journal publications only

## Regional Studies Impact Factors



## Spatial Economic Analysis Impact Factors



2005



Regions 2010

### **Regional Studies, Regional Science**

Launched in late 2013 this new journal is gold Open Access. It is therefore an innovative addition to the existing suite of hybrid RSA journals. With article processing charges subsidised by the Association it offers an inexpensive route to Open Access publishing alongside a number of innovations. These include the use of a refereeing panel providing rapid referee responses (only 14 weeks from submission to publication in November 2014); a regional graphics' section taking papers demonstrating data visualisation; publishing both unconventionally short and long articles and articles with associated commentaries. Importantly it offers a mentored paper section for early career researchers. In its first 12 months it has published 27 articles including 11 early career mentored route papers and 2 regional graphics. It has attracted in excess of 17,000 full text downloads.

### **Downloads on Territory, Politics, Governance**

*When Territory Deborders Territoriality, Saskia Sassen,*  
Article Views: 6306

*How Should We Do the History of Territory? Stuart Eldon,*  
Article Views: 4581

*Explaining (with) Neoliberalism, Jamie Peck,*  
Article Views: 3716

*Territory, Politics, Governance, John A. Agnew,*  
Article Views 2670

## **Conferences and Events**

The Association runs a globally respected series of conferences and events. These benefit the different sectors of our membership – students, early career researchers, academics and policy makers and practitioners. Some events cater for all, while others are targeted by geography or theme to predetermined categories of our membership. Events are run at scales from the regional to international. The Association seeks to increase the impact of its events by running more events and by attracting more people to attend them. Events will continue to be thematically structured and market oriented. The challenges in this area are leadership in terms of topic selection, retention of participants, talent monitoring and community building. The Association seeks to use its conferences to promote research and debate on the key issues it identifies in our field through the selection of plenary speakers and the organisation of special panels and paper sessions.

In a change to the previous strategy, the Association will concentrate on a single "Annual" conference each year supported by a number of other events of different kinds and scales such as publishing events, early career, policy and territorial conferences.

### **Achievements 2008-2013**

- In the planning period the Association has run 10 global events in 10 countries including the USA, China, Brazil, Turkey, Finland and the UK. The total number of events held is 116, with 104 being held in Europe
- The Association has innovated. In 2013 a publications conference was run at UCLA, Los Angeles with capped attendance numbers with all Association publishing outlets represented. This event was one of the most favourably reviewed conferences in our history
- The policy conference programme has been strengthened partly through the use of collaborative arrangements with organisations such as the Smith Institute. These events often employ a dual strategy of pamphlet and conference, which works well with the policy community
- Early Career conferences have been introduced and attendee numbers are growing
- New format web pages have supported the conference programme well with more hits and fewer calls to the RSA office for conference related information

### **RSA Membership and Conference Portals**

- During the planning period the Association has invested in two conference and membership portals – the technology moved very quickly during this period. These investments have been popular with members as they are easy to use and they are also popular with the office team as they facilitate the back room functions for events and membership. These are big investments both financially and in terms of planning, specification, delivery, training and implementation

## Conference Pricing

- In 2009, to assist with equality of access, the Association introduced a territorial pricing for its major conferences which uses GDP per capita on a pp basis. This has proved popular with the membership in all territorial bands and increasing numbers of participants are attending from bands B, C and D

## Priorities for 2015 - 2020

- Run events which are innovative and excellent. We will seek to innovate through thematic session planning, organisation of plenary programming and the arrangement of fringe meetings and social engagements (including sporting opportunities) allowing for effective networking
- We will seek to make our events inclusive and accessible to all through the use of careful pricing strategies supported by a transparent conference bursary scheme and the use of new communication technologies such as web-streaming and social media
- We will seek to increase both the number and variety of events that are organised (whether physically or virtually) and the number of individuals that participate in them
- Pay attention to the geography of our programme to ensure that new markets are properly represented and included in the work of the Association

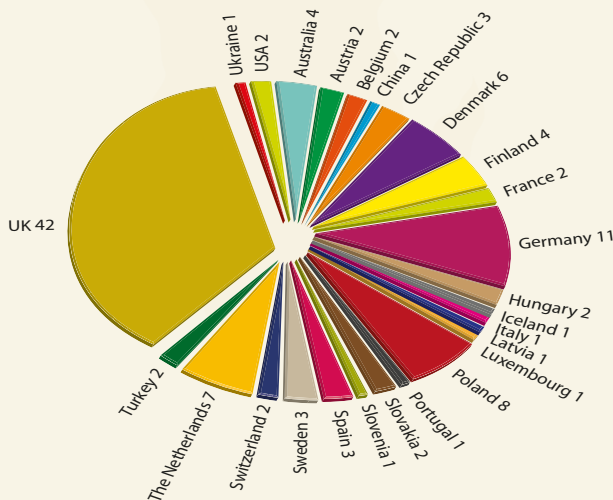
- Seek to increase the level of sponsorship attracted in order both to allow a better level of provision for the events and / or lower entrance fees and to raise the profile of our events
- Use our conference and events programme as a spring board to building new relationships
- Plan a range of different types of events leading with an annual conference but supplemented by one day, two-day and specialist events such as policy seminars and publications meetings

## Case Studies

### *International Conference 2013, Global Urbanisation: Challenges and Prospects – UCLA, Los Angeles, USA, 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2013*

This event was an innovation for the RSA in that attendance was tightly controlled with a maximum number of 120 and tightly prescribed themes. Sixty per cent of attendees were by invitation with the remainder being selected from the response to the call for papers.

Editors were present from all the Association’s publications and presentation slots in all sessions were deliberately long to allow speakers time to develop their arguments. The sun shone on the Covell Commons Centre and the conference feedback was the most glowing in the Association’s history. Plenary speakers included Richard Florida (Toronto, Canada); John Agnew (UCLA, USA); Michael Storper (LSE, UK), Ananya Roy (UC Berkeley, USA); Danny Dorling (Oxford, UK) and Andrew Beer (Adelaide, Australia).



Global reach and number of RSA Research Networks and other events 2008-2013

### *European Conference – Regional Responses and Global Shifts: Actors, Institutions and Organisations: Pécs, Hungary, 24<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> May 2010*

This event was attended by 540 people from 44 countries including Egypt, Mexico, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan and saw 423 papers presented over 3 days in 147 sessions. Plenary speakers included Dirk Ahner, Director-General, EU Regional Policy, European Commission and Gerhard Stahl, Secretary-General, Committee of the Regions. The event brought together established policy makers, practitioners from many European regions and all career stages of academics in a vibrant mix of sessions including plenaries, round tables, workshops, meet the editors and discussion groups.

## Membership and Community Building

The Association's core strength lies in the commitment of its members. The Association acknowledges that its activities can only be as strong as its membership, and we are determined to continue to offer high quality and differentiated membership benefits. The Association continues its commitment to recognising membership by career stage and geography as does its acknowledgement of the need for inclusivity through appropriate pricing strategies.

### Achievements 2008-2013

- Growth in membership numbers – membership grew by more than 50% between 2007 and the year-end 2014
- Growth in the geography of our membership - members in February 2015 are drawn from 61 countries
- Change in membership demographic profile – student membership has doubled between 2008 and 2013 and early career membership is now higher than student membership
- Introduction of membership territorial pricing in 2009 based on GDP per capita on a price parity basis
- Introduction of the early career membership category in 2008

- Increase in membership services especially for the early career and student communities whose numbers were decreasing in 2007 e.g. Facebook community for early career, *Regional Insights*, Early Career Researcher Grants Scheme
- Introduction of two new membership and events platforms during the planning period. This has allowed the introduction of rolling rather than calendar year memberships and the possibility of online renewals and a standard 10% early bird discount

### Priorities for 2015 - 2020

- To continue a growth trajectory for membership in absolute numbers and in terms of geographical diversity
- To build the strength of the individual category of membership
- To create a network of regional studies and science centres

The Association wishes to establish a network of centres for the study and practice of regional studies and science. These centres will be corporate RSA members but will form a network within membership and will have some call on the resource within the office to service their activities. The goal is to provide a forum where comparable entities can meet, network and



Geographical Spread of the RSA members 2007-2013

share experiences. This initiative acknowledges that much regional research is undertaken by teams of researchers working in collaboration across nations.

### Association's Fellowship Scheme

The post nominals MeRSA and FeRSA were respectively introduced in 2010 and 2011 to provide members with immediate recognition of their professional commitment to the field.

The Association's Fellowship Scheme rewards excellence in the field. The status of this award will be raised. New appointees will be welcomed into Fellowship not only through acknowledgement in *Regions* (the members' magazine) but through announcement and recognition at conferences and events, and through invitation to contribute their profile to the Association's website and social media. Alongside this activity, members will be encouraged to use the post-nominals MeRSA and FeRSA. As part of this process the conditions for fellowship will be reviewed.

### Regions

We will continue to reflect on the ways *Regions* can best serve the membership. We will innovate in forms of delivery, focus, content and frequency of publication

### Community Building

The Association builds its community in many ways but one of these is through the recognition of excellence and to this end a number of awards are made each year.

#### Achievements 2008 – 2013

- The Association introduced the Awards scheme in 2009 to celebrate excellence in the field of regional studies and recognised across both individuals and organisations:
  - **Contribution to the field** – the Sir Peter Hall Award
  - **RSA Institutional Award for Excellence**
  - **Early Career Award** – the RSA/Routledge Early Career Awards

- **Taught Master Award** – the Nathaniel Lichfield Award
- **RSA Best Book Award** – voted for by the Association's membership
- **Best Paper Regional Studies**
- **Best Referee Regional Studies**
- **Best Paper Spatial Economic Analysis**
- **Best Referee Spatial Economic Analysis**
- **Best Paper Territory, Politics, Governance**
- **Best Referee Territory, Politics, Governance**
- **Best Paper Regional Studies, Regional Science**
- **Best Referee Regional Studies, Regional Science**

Two new Awards were subsequently created to further represent the field of regional studies:

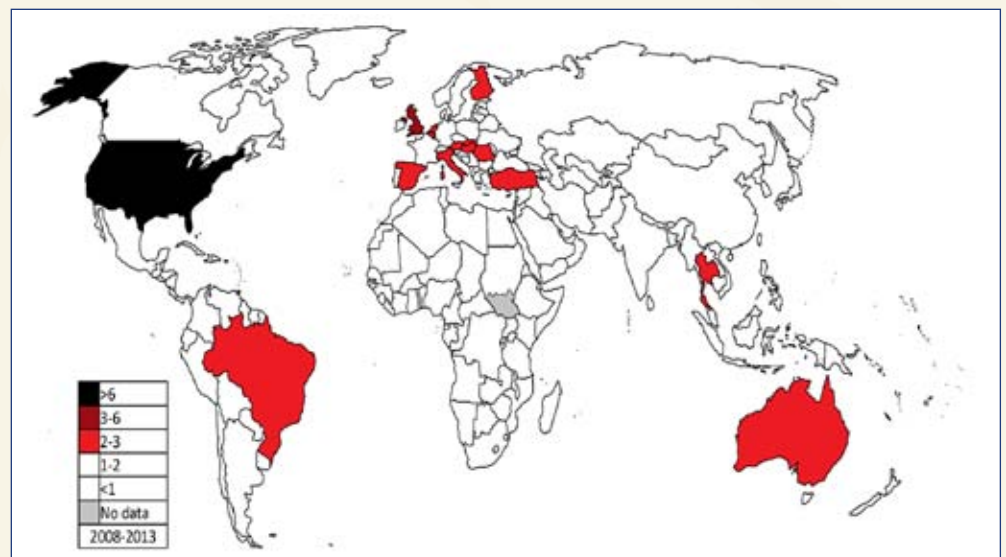
- **The Regional Policy and Practice Award** – this award is to recognise institutional contribution
- **The Social Media/Journalism Award**

The Association also awards the **Best Paper** and **Best Paper in the Early Career Category** in its major international conferences.

### RSA Travel Grants

Since the launch of the RSA Travel Grant in 2009, 24 members have been awarded with the recipients spread across the globe:

Map of Travel Grants awarded





## Case Studies of Grant Holders



### Chung-shing Chan (2012), Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

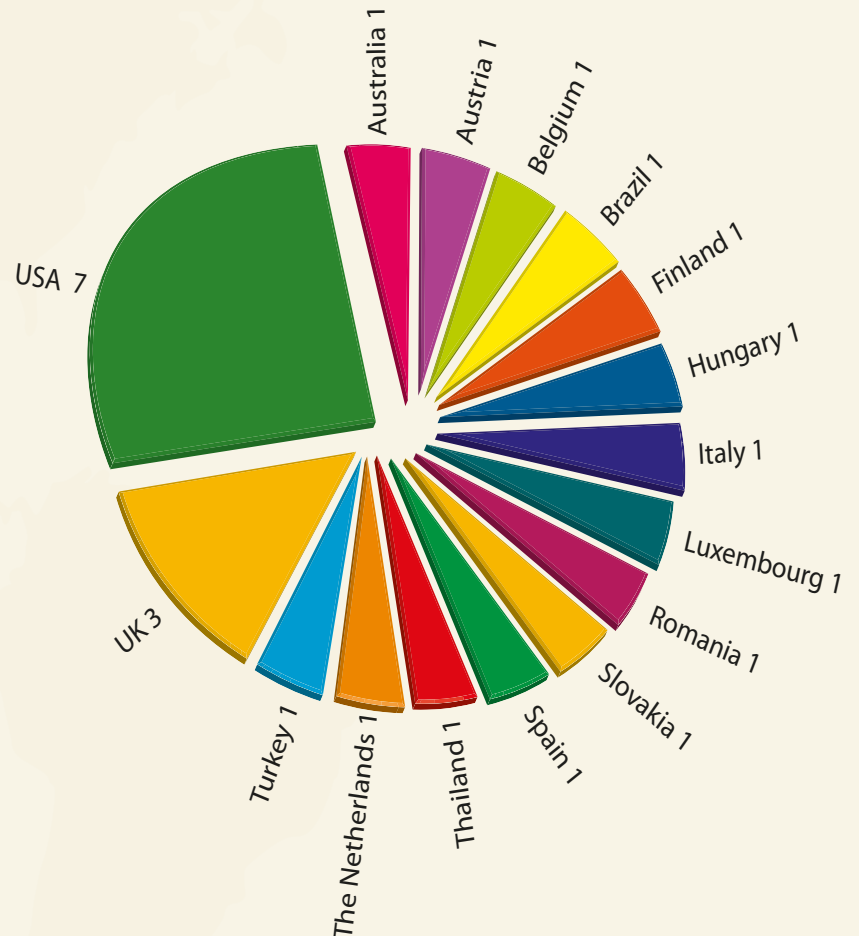
**2012 Conference on Sustainable Business in Asia, Bangkok, Thailand, 1-3 Nov 2012**

Attending this conference enriched my knowledge of sustainable business development and management, particularly with some case studies focused in Asian countries and cities. Through presentations by various scholars and experts in the field, I saw different ways of viewing my research - not only from a perspective of geography or resource management, but also from a business or marketing approach.



### Lidia K.C. Manzo (2015), Politecnico di Milano University, Italy

From February 26th to March 1st 2015, the Eastern Sociological Society held a four day annual conference under the main theme "Crossing Borders" at the Millennium Hotel Convention Centre of New York, USA. The special focus of the 2015 meeting invited discussion on the social construction and social impacts of borders dividing individuals, groups, and nations. Attending this conference in New York strengthened the academic connection related to my Ph.D. field research performed in Brooklyn (NYC) in 2011-2012. It gave me the opportunity to discuss some preliminary findings of my work relating to gentrification, class and diversity in global cities. Around 30 participants in the audience attended the presentation, providing a stimulating debate. This helped me to reframe my conceptualization of spatial inequality before sending my paper for journal publication, and promoted my competences for job opportunities. Most importantly, all of the participant feedback gave me crucial insights not only on my research questions but also on American cities that are similar but fundamentally different to those in Europe.



With this financial assistance Travel Grant winners have attended events in the following places –

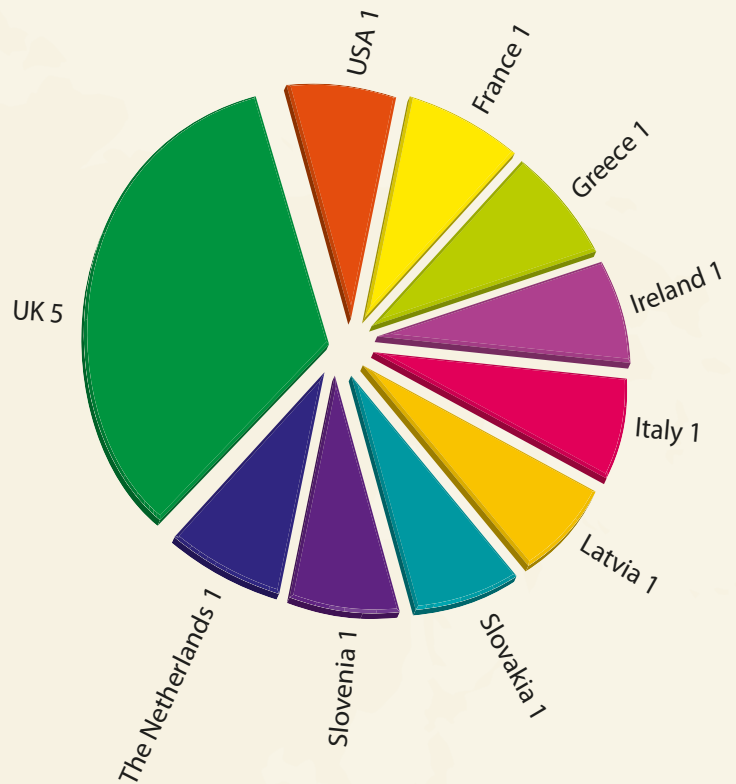
## RSA Event Support Scheme (ESS) (2010-2014)

The EES was launched in 2010 to support RSA members to organise a one-off non-RSA event (from £500 to £1000).

Between 2010 and 2013, fourteen non-RSA events were supported via the Scheme with an average of 87 participants per event. This scheme was discontinued in 2014 with the monies reallocated to the Research Networks budget to further support RSA community building activities.

### Case Studies of Event Support Schemes

In 2012 Dr Elita Jermolajeva was awarded an Event Support Scheme grant for the 7th International Scientific Conference addressing - "Social Sciences for Regional Development 2012: Impact of the Financial Capital on the Region's Economic Competitiveness" which was held at the Daugavpils University, Daugavpils, Latvia. This event brought together international researchers and resulted in a number of journal articles.



Location of events supported by the RSA Event Support Scheme (2010-2014)



In 2014, Beatrix Haselsberger, Vienna University of Technology, Austria was awarded an Event Support Scheme grant for her "The Evolution of Planning Thought Lecture Series" which brought together 15 of the most highly respected planners in the world and over 500 delegates over three days of meetings, seminars, a world cafe and open lectures. The event resulted in a book of essays and contributions.

## Territorial Networks

The Territorial Networks are key to delivery of the Association's services and benefits to members in their locality and are crucial to fostering networking and communication. They are conduits to growing the level of energy in the membership encouraging submissions to our publications and participation in our conferences and events. They enable many voices to be heard on current debates and have the potential to play a critical role in building impact.

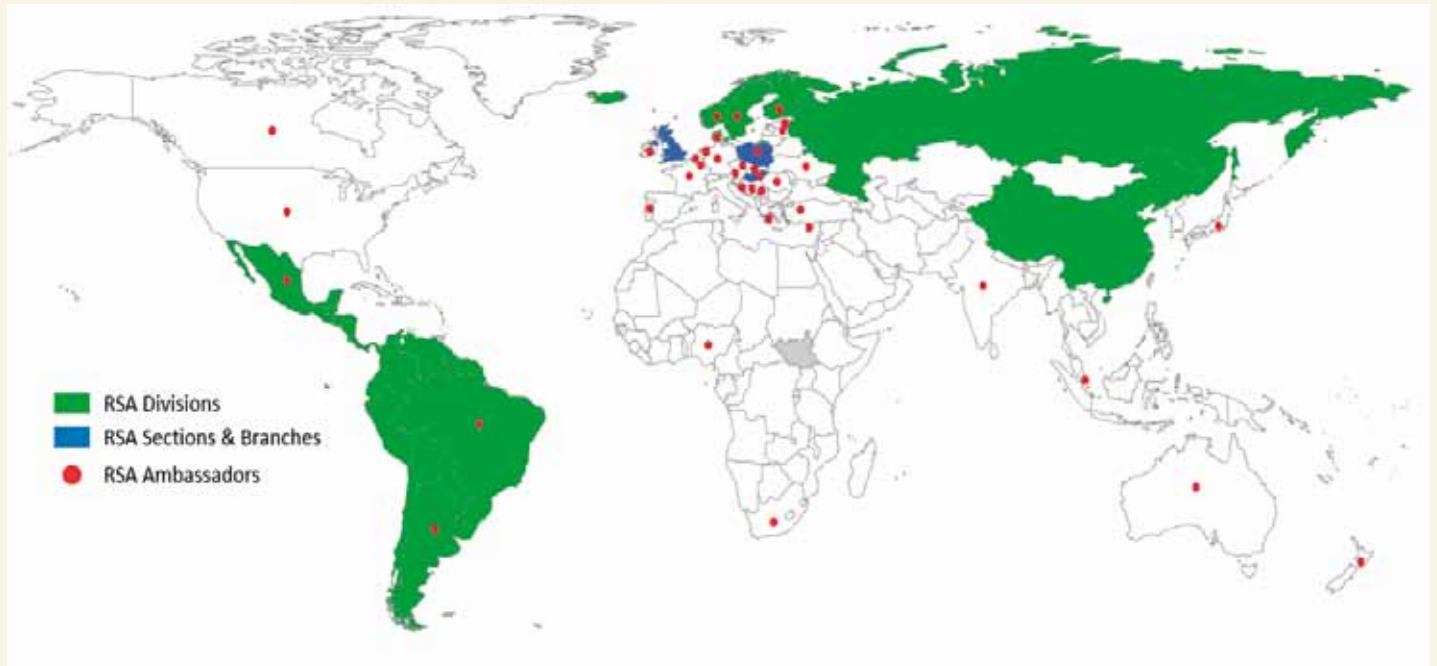
### *Achievements 2008-2013*

- On 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014, the Association launched its RSA China Division. This Division is chaired by Professor Weidong Liu, Assistant Director of the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of

Sciences where the Division has its base and hosts an RSA Project Office. The section launched with 66 members, and this is expected to grow steadily

- In 2012, RSA country representatives were renamed RSA Ambassadors and International Sections were renamed Divisions. The Association, as of November 2014 had 3 Divisions (soon to be 4 with the opening of the Latin America Division due in June 2015), 5 Sections, 6 Branches and 42 Ambassadors in 39 countries compared to 2 International Sections, 11 UK Branches and 26 Ambassadors in 2007
- There has been growth of 105% of USA members in the period 2009-2013. The bulk of this growth occurred in the months during and following the CEO's placement at UCLA, Los Angeles

Geographical location of the RSA's international networks: Divisions, Sections, Branches and Ambassadors (April 2015)



*Priorities for 2015 - 2020*

- Establish satellite project offices in Beijing, China; UCLA, USA and possibly within Eastern Europe
- Develop work with BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) leading with the launch of new publishing outlets for member and researchers in these territories
- Establish a Division in Eastern Europe
- Review the territorial membership banding ensuring that the methodology used is the most appropriate
- Enable the Chief Executive to visit the RSA priority territories to lead activity and respond to the need to provide additional resource in the headquarters to allow the time for this developmental activity to happen
- Ring-fence some funding in the research and conference bursary budgets to support applications from target areas
- Work closely with existing Divisions, Sections and RSA Ambassadors seeking to support them in their work for the Association and in promoting Division activity

**Case Studies****RSA NORSA Division**

Norsa was established at a meeting in Umeå, Sweden, in September 2008. It is a collaboration between Association members in Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland with a relationship with Nordregio – the Nordic Centre for Spatial Development. The Division was set up with 5 aims:

- promote knowledge about regional and local development and governance
- initiate and support studies and research on development and functioning of regional and local structures
- act for the promotion of regional sciences among all subjects participating in social, political and economic life
- establish international cooperation in theoretical and practical approaches to regional development
- cooperate with various institutions, organisations and associations with similar goals and objectives

It successfully operates through bi-annual conferences and the participation and collaboration of its members.

**RSA China Division**

This idea was conceived in 2012 during the RSA global conference in Beijing. It was launched on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 and is run by a committee drawing membership from all parts of China and representing the principle regional research centres. The Division has a project office with funding from the RSA to establish itself with a brand and reputation for high quality regional research with the academic, policy and practice communities. A key aim is to foster understanding and collaborative working between Chinese scholars and those working elsewhere in the world. The Division seeks to work through conferences (the next one being held in Hangzhou in 2015), seminars, and a publication.

**RSA Ambassadors****Tom Christoffel, USA**

As the RSA practice based Ambassador for the USA, Tom has been active in attending meetings on regional studies subjects such as the Association of American Geographers (AAG), the American Planning Association (APA) or the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP), ensuring the Association not only had a voice but was at the forefront of debates in the USA. As a practitioner, Tom Christoffel has used his many contacts to ensure that members could be recruited and that membership benefits such as grants and bursaries were announced at the events he has attended. Tom has been the recipient of RSA marketing materials to support his promotional efforts.

**Attila Korompai, Hungary**

Attila developed his role to create and lead the RSA Hungarian Division and co-organised the very successful Pécs Conference with the RSA team. He has played a key role in promoting the RSA in Hungary for example he ensured a high quality field of applicants from Hungary for the first Open Days Master Class.

## Policy and Knowledge Exchange

The Association attaches considerable importance to its work in this area where it seeks to debate, inform and lead to change in chosen areas. It works from a position of strength particularly in terms of leading debates and informing in its policy engagement and knowledge exchange work. Its close relationship with DG Regio (European Commission) and the Committee of the Regions on projects such as the European OPEN DAYS, the European Master Class, Early Career Poster Competition and recent (and forthcoming) EU Cohesion Policy conferences continues to offer multiple opportunities for regional studies and science academics to engage with policy makers and practitioners.

The Association seeks to build a community of regional practitioners sufficiently broadly defined to encompass policy evaluators. The aim would be to facilitate knowledge exchange through for example, RSA website promotion of opportunities for non-academic posts to enhance research-policy exchanges.

We are aware of the need to develop a range of policy partnerships at different scales and in different territories. The challenge will be to maintain these given current resources and priorities will need to be set. It will also be important to monitor Association influence in effecting change through its work.

### *Achievements 2008-2013*

- The Association co-hosted with DG Regio and the Slovenian Government, the first academic conference following the publication of the 5th Cohesion Report in Bled, Slovenia
- The Association has been the exclusive partner to DG Regio and the Committee of the Regions in the organisation of the OPEN DAYS European Week of Cities and Regions for 5 years. See the case study box for more details of this important knowledge exchange activity
- The RSA has used strategic partnerships to grow its policy influence most notably working with the UK Smith Institute

- Drawing on the experience of Board members, Association members and the staff team's experience the Association has responded to 42 consultations and provided expert advice in 2010 to the House of Commons, Select Committee on Business, Innovation and Skills on their discussion of Local Enterprise Partnerships. Sally Hardy participated in All Party Groups on the topic of Open Access publishing in 2013 and letters were published in the Guardian and Observer newspapers in 2013 on this topic

### *Priorities for 2015 - 2020*

- Develop a community of regional practitioners and develop relationships between this and the academic members, seeking to build a role as a dynamic translator and interpreter of knowledge for policy and practice. Consideration will need to be given to funding for this work. A network of centres would be expected to contribute to this priority
- Establish an RSA Inquiry in celebration of the Association's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the aim of influencing policy following publication. Seek during the process of the Inquiry to draw upon the experience and reflection of as many members and RSA interest groups as possible in order to reflect on the international nature of the Association and the challenges that the world faces
- To consider the development of new products to serve policy and practice based members and partners – this may include briefing notes
- Continue to invest in our relationships into Europe and seek influence in other meta-level organisations accepting that to make real impact probably means focussing on a smaller number of topics and organisations
- Develop our role and level of engagement as a United Nations NGO
- Ensure that RSA funded research activity is disseminated effectively into policy and practice circles internationally

### ***OPEN DAYS European Week of Cities and Regions, 2013***

This Europe wide event attracts around 6,000 policy makers and practitioners to Brussels to share best practice in regional policy. Since 2009 the Association has partnered DG Region and the Committee of the Regions in organising sessions within the important OPEN DAYS University. In 2013 it organised four sessions on “Building growth in European regions”, “The emerging role of mid-sized cities”, “Leadership and Regions” and “Spatial Justice in Future European Regional Development”.

It also co-hosted the prestigious OPEN DAYS Master Class which had 71 selected students from 31 countries over 2 days to learn about Cohesion policy with speakers including the Commissioner Johannes Hahn and Director General Dirk Ahner. The event included a hotly contested poster competition seeing Dr Martijn Smit win with a poster entitled “Agglomeration Literature: A meta-analysis”. The closing event was a highly interactive World Café with tables hosted by European Commission and other officials and academics. This experimental format was deemed to be highly successful and was repeated in 2014 and has a commitment for 2015.

### ***Smith Institute 2013***

The RSA has collaborated with the Smith Institute on four projects to date involving the writing of 4 policy pamphlets addressing “The Future of Regional Policy” (2009), “Changing Gear” (2012) and “Where next LEPS” (2013) and “Regional Health and Wellbeing” (2015). These influential policy documents were each launched within the Palace of Westminster with a parliamentarians’ seminar. This high profile series has attracted a great deal of attention and in all cases the seminars were sell outs.

### ***Cohesion Policy – What Future for Cohesion Policy? An Academic and Policy Debate, 16-18 March 2011, Bled, Slovenia***

This event was the first of a series of events organised in partnership with DG Regio, European Commission and a selected member state to consider the Cohesion Report in an academic and policy context.

The event in Slovenia was innovative and organised by the RSA, DG Regio and the Slovenian Government to bring together three communities of stakeholders in European Cohesion Policy – academics, Brussels functionaries and the Managing Authorities. The conference brought together 180 people over 2 days to discuss the 5<sup>th</sup> Cohesion Report. Over sixty papers were presented from all stakeholder groups and full discussions were facilitated through the use of practitioner chairs, discussion sessions and roundtables. The event was repeated in early 2015 in Latvia in partnership with the Latvian Government and considering the 6<sup>th</sup> Cohesion Report.

### ***United Nations NGO and UN-Habitat engagement***

The RSA has been a United Nations recognised NGO since 1989. In 2014 the Association was represented by Board member, Dr Ulrich Graute at a UN Economic and Social Council on Sustainable Urbanisation meeting. The Association sought to build networks to the UN and others working in this important area. As is the case in all policy environments the Association needs to make a sustained commitment to this networking activity to build trust and understanding.

Professor Gordon Dabinett represented the Association at the 2014 UN-Habitat series of meetings on the Sustainable Development of Cities. Attending two meetings, held in Paris, France and Fukuoka, Japan, Gordon joined an expert group which oversaw the publication of guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning to complement the International Guidelines on Decentralisation and Strengthening of Local Authorities (2007). The Association has been invited to engage in the next UN-Habitat exercise on regional planning.

### Maximising Impact

The Association will seek to maximise its impact in achieving its strategic goals by

- Remaining in touch with its memberships' needs using a variety of methods of communication
- Continuing to work on its communication with its various other communities – non-members globally, partners and suppliers through the development of a communications strategy incorporating consideration of the Association's image and branding
- Securing its partnerships with
  - Key partners such as DG Regio, Committee of the Regions, United Nations, UN-Habitat, OECD, World Bank, Smith Institute
  - key suppliers such as Taylor and Francis and Berforts Printing

The Association recognises that through partnership working it is possible to create both the intellectual excitement and gravitas in order for projects and outcomes to have appropriate impact. It commits to the development of strategy in this area

- Ensuring that the Association resource base (including staffing) is appropriate for the delivery of its international programme of activity
- Regularly revisiting the Development Plan to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and up to date handling challenges strategically
- Striving for smart implementation of plans
- Be always seeking to enjoy ourselves as an organisation. We recognise the enormous amount of volunteer input that we benefit from and we pledge that our active members get something from their engagement with us. Volunteer efforts should have some reward.

## Technology and Communication

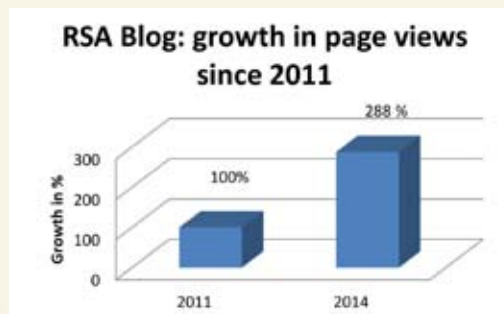
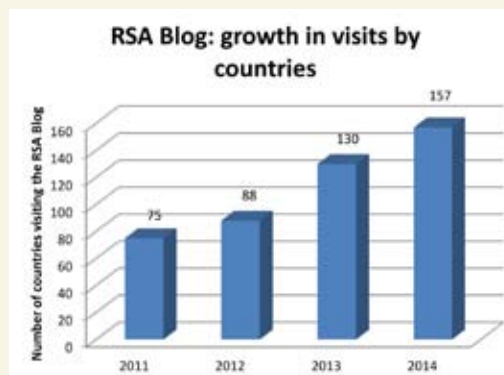
### New RSA Website

A new website was designed in 2008 and again in 2012 latterly incorporating both online portal to registration for RSA events and membership

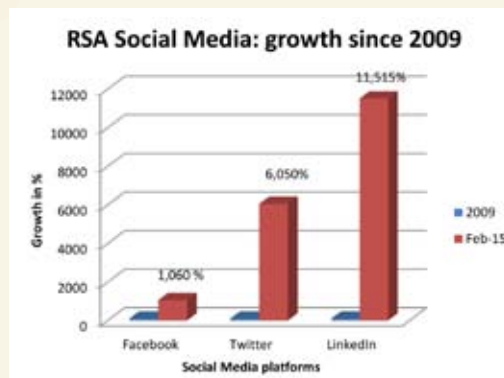
and a full content management system. The latest update gives the Association far more flexibility to manage the content of the site and ensure that it is kept up to date.

### Social Media Fact and Figures

During the last planning period the RSA has worked hard to raise its profile on social media and operates on a number of platforms including two Facebook sites (one specifically run by and for early career researchers); LinkedIn and Twitter. We also host an active blog which was edited by Dr Alasdair Rae (University of Sheffield, UK) and which is now edited by Alexandru Ghita (Consultant, Romania).



According to Google Analytics, the growing presence of the RSA on the social media platforms has resulted in an increase of more than 15% of users visiting the RSA website.



## RSA Management

### The Board

The Association is managed by a democratically elected Board of Trustees who are also the Directors of the Company. They number between 3 and 12 individuals and they are supplemented by a number of co-optees who are also trustees but who are elected by the Board with regard to the need for skills on the Board. These appointments run between AGMs where their appointment is reported.

The Board seeks to fill its number with the appropriate balance of skills and then to reflect the diversity of the membership and wider population of the field of regional studies and science. During the planning period efforts have been made to strengthen the balance of genders on the Board and to ensure that it reflects the very quickly growing international balance of

membership while taking into account the need and convenience of having UK Board members to expedite the business of the Association through the UK based staff team.

Managing gender balance in all that the Association does remains a challenge. Between 2007 and 2013 its female representation on the Board increased from 6% to 18%. We will continue to seek appropriate levels of engagement from both genders in all our activities through board, committee and other working group memberships and plenary speaker selection.

The Board has become very much more international since 2007 when of 14 members 10 were from the UK, 3 were European and one was Australian. In 2015 the picture is radically different with members from Africa, Australia, China, Western and Eastern Europe and Singapore as well as a much reduced representation from the UK.



### RSA Office

During the period 2008-2013, the Association office team employed thirteen members of staff of various nationalities including American, British, French, German and Italian. In 2006 the staff team comprised three people, it grew to four in 2007 and in 2014 was seven of whom four are British and three are mainland Europeans. The Association also indirectly supports employment for an additional four individuals, three working on our journals within the editorial offices and one working for the China Division.

### Priorities 2015- 2020

- The Association will continue to recruit Board members who are engaged, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, representative of the membership and to provide them with appropriate training
- Staffing – the intention is to restructure the office team to better map onto the demands of the new Development Plan for expansion and community engagement. This will require a shift from a traditional learned society form of hierarchical organisation to one which more closely resembles a think tank where there will be team leadership and project officers each managing a portfolio of activity. This shift will require the development of staff capabilities, training and mentoring where appropriate. It is pleasing to note that this shift has been welcomed by the existing staff team.





The RSA Team (2014) on a visit to a local energy recycling plant to learn about sustainable development and its impact on the local and regional economy. From left to right – Auréliane Beauclair, Sally Hardy, Elizabeth Mitchell, Benoit Sauvage, Michael Curameng-Henderson, Lesa Reynolds and Daniela Carl.

- Finance – the governance structure of the Association will be reviewed to ensure that the most effective and efficient arrangements are in place. The Association works diligently to ensure full compliance with all relevant legislation whether that be directly financial such as VAT, Health and Safety, Employment Law, Company's or Charity such as the development of an updated risk register.
- Social and Environmental Responsibility – each year in its Annual Report the Association receives a report of direct carbon and other greenhouse emissions. Staff are encouraged to use public transport, travel is minimised with use of electronic meetings where possible. The Association has a well used Bike to Work scheme in place. We seek to use suppliers with appropriate sensitivity to environmental concerns and report this for our publishers and printers. When suitable the Association has worked with the local school to take sixth form interns and we have worked very successfully with interns on degree courses.

## Finances

The Association is organised around the strategic priorities set out in the Development Plan. Once approved the office team draw up detailed action plans for implementation including timings and lines of responsibility. The

annual budget which is approved by the Board draws down from this process. Regular reviews are held of both the budget and performance against the Development Plan during the year. In the case of the planning period 2008 – 2013 a mid-term review was necessary to insert new and more challenging targets.

## Your Feedback

### We are keen to hear your thoughts.

Please tell us if we have covered what you would expect to see in this report and forward look. Have we missed any good ideas or opportunities? Have we got the balance of our priorities right? Have we made sufficient progress in the last planning period? An Association is as strong as its members are active and engaged – please help us to build a stronger and more resilient home for you and others in our field. We would welcome your involvement in helping us to meet our strategic goals.

You may give your feedback in the following ways:

- In person to any member of the RSA Board or staff team
- By email to the chief executive – [sally.hardy@regionalstudies.org](mailto:sally.hardy@regionalstudies.org)
- By email to the chair – [andrew.beer@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:andrew.beer@adelaide.edu.au)
- Via our website on the "contact us" link on the home page
- By telephone to the RSA office – +44 (0) 1323 899698

We look forward to hearing from you,

Andrew Beer  
Chair

Sally Hardy  
Chief Executive

