

**Assessment of Urban
and Regional Research
in the Netherlands,
2000-2006**

January 2008

Committee

Prof. Robson (chair)

Prof. Albrechts

Prof. Bailey

Prof. Clapham

Prof. Ehlers

Prof. McCann

Prof. Longley

Graphical design

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1 Introduction

The committee was asked to evaluate research institutes in Urban and Regional Research. The involved institutes are all members of the Netherlands Graduate School of Urban and Regional Research NETHUR, a joint initiative of the Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA), Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), Technische Universiteit Eindhoven (TU/e), Radboud University Nijmegen (RU), University of Groningen (RuG) and Utrecht University (UU), which hosts the secretariat. NETHUR offers an educational programme for PhD candidates and a collaborative programme of research by these candidates and their supervisors. Over a hundred individuals are currently preparing their PhD dissertation under its auspices. In addition, some 120 tenured staff members participate in NETHUR.

NETHUR aims at being the main academic centre of scientific research in the Netherlands for urban and regional studies with a recognized prominent international position. It takes prime responsibility for academic scientific development and sets the research agenda in the fields of human geography (social, economic and regional/cultural geography), urban and regional planning (including transportation planning), housing studies, demography, cartography, geographical information science and related interdisciplinary studies. NETHUR coordinates all highly qualified senior and post doc researchers and all PhD students under their supervision.

The core business of the involved institutes is urban and regional research within the social, economic and technical sciences. Staff and PhD students of the assessed institutes also participate in other research schools: CERES, TRAIL and SENSE. The committee however did not evaluate the added value of other research schools. NETHUR and its assets for the evaluated institutes will be mentioned in several of the following chapters.

1.1 Evaluation protocol

The boards of the universities co-operating in NETHUR decided to establish a joint evaluation of the involved institutes with the exception of the TU/e¹.

The evaluation committee was asked to assess against international scientific standards the research institutes mentioned under section 2 and their research programmes specified in appendix 1 in the period 2000 up to and including 2006.

In addition the evaluation committee was asked to reflect upon the various contributions of each institute under review to the discipline and upon the research portfolio they represent for the Netherlands within their field.

The evaluation protocol is an elaboration of the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) 2003 - 2009 for public research organisations in The Netherlands. The SEP stipulates the requirements for research assessments of institutes of the Dutch universities and of the NWO and KNAW as agreed by the governing boards of the association of universities VSNU and of the NWO and KNAW. For items not covered in this protocol the provisions of the SEP apply.

The governing boards of Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), Radboud University Nijmegen (RU), Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA), University of Groningen (RUG) and Utrecht University (UU) are responsible for the present evaluation. They appointed the

¹ Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning (BWK) of the TU/e is participating in another research assessment procedure.

chair and members of the committee. They determined the protocol for the evaluation. They are responsible for the publication of the reports of the committee and for the conclusions to be drawn from these reports.

This research assessment concerns:

- 1 Urban and Regional Studies Institute (URSI) of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, RUG
- 2 Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies (AMIDSt) of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, UvA
- 3 OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies (OTB), TU Delft
- 4 Urban and Regional Research Centre Utrecht (URU) of the Faculty of Geosciences, UU
- 5 Institute for Management Research (IMR) of the Nijmegen School of Management, RU

The committee reviewed the following research programmes:

Urban and Regional Studies Institute (URSI) of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences (FRW), RUG

- 1 Explaining spatial-economic change
- 2 Determinants of population dynamics
- 3 Planning for environmental quality
- 4 Making places

Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies (AMIDSt) of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, UvA

- 1 Urban Geographies
- 2 Planning, Institutions and Transforming Spaces
- 3 Space and Economy
- 4 Territories, Identities and Representations
- 5 Livelihoods, Environment and Governance

OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies (OTB), TU Delft

- 1 Housing Systems
- 2 Sustainable Housing Transformations
- 3 Urban and Regional Development
- 4 Urban Renewal and Housing
- 5 Mobility Studies
- 6 GIS Technology

Urban and Regional Research Centre Utrecht (URU) of the Faculty of Geosciences, UU

- 1 Urban Geography, Land Use and Spatial Planning
- 2 Economic Geography
- 3 Geography, Development and Representation
- 4 History of Cartography

Institute for Management Research (IMR) of the Nijmegen School of Management (NSM), RU

- 1 Governance and Places (GaP)

1.2 Evaluation Committee

The University Boards appointed Professor B. Robson as the chair of the committee. The committee consisted of:

- Prof. Brian Robson, University of Manchester, UK
- Prof. Louis Albrechts, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium
- Prof. Adrian Bailey, University of Leeds, UK
- Prof. David Clapham, University of Cardiff, UK
- Prof. Philip McCann, University of Waikato, New Zealand

- Prof. Eckart Ehlers, University of Bonn, Germany
- Prof. Paul Longley, University College London, UK

More detailed information about the committee members can be found in Appendix B. The University Boards appointed Dr. Barbara van Balen as secretary of the committee.

1.3 The Input for the Assessment Process

The input for the evaluation comprised of

- self-evaluation reports submitted by the involved institutes;
- key publications of the research programs under review;
- interviews with the Board of the Faculty, management of the institutes and representatives of the research programs during the site visits.

The self-evaluation reports were of major interest for the assessment and they proved an invaluable context for the subsequent discussions with the individual institutes and their programmes. The factual background and outlines of aims and objectives were extremely helpful; the obvious honesty and openness of the SWOT analyses undertaken by each institute reflected both careful self-evaluation and the seriousness with which the exercise was undertaken. The committee wishes to express its admiration and thanks for the efforts made by the institutes in producing these invaluable reports.

1.4 The Site Visit

The site visit was scheduled for the period, September 2-7, 2007. The evaluation committee opted to meet with a broad representation of each research programme (programme leaders, researchers, and PhD students).

During the site visits the evaluation committee interviewed:

September 3 2007 URSI Groningen

Management/Board

Prof. Gerard Linden, dean
 Prof. Inge Hutter, vice dean research
 Ms. Gerda Groen, finances and personnel

Programme Explaining Spatial Economic Change

Prof. Jouke van Dijk, programme leader
 Prof. Piet Pellenbarg
 Dr. Ruud Dorenbos, assistant professor
 Dr. Sierdjan Koster, post-doc researcher

Programme Determinants of Population Dynamics

Prof. Inge Hutter, programme leader
 Prof. Leo van Wissen
 Dr. Fanny Janssen, assistant professor

Programme Planning Environmental Quality

Prof. Gert de Roo, programme leader
 Prof. Peter Ho
 Dr. Justin Beaumont, post-doc researcher/research nucleus

Programme Making Places

Prof. Paulus Huigen, programme leader
 Prof. Dirk Strijker
 Dr. Peter Groote, assistant professor

September 4 AMIDSt, University of Amsterdam

Management

Prof. Dymph van den Boom, dean Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences

Dr. Johan Post, deputy chair Department of Geography, Planning and International Development Studies

Prof. Robert Kloosterman, director AMIDSt

Gert van der Meer, manager AMIDSt

Urban Geographies

Prof. Sako Musterd, programme leader Dr. Lia Karsten, associate professor Dr. Aslan Zorlu, post doc researcher Fenne Pinkster, PhD student

Planning, Institutions and Transforming Spaces

Prof. Willem Salet, programme leader Dr. Luca Bertolini, associate professor Dr. Maarten Wolsink, associate professor

Dr. Leonie Janssen-Jansen, assistant professor

Thomas Straatemeijer, PhD student

Space and Economy

Prof. Robert Kloosterman, programme leader

Dr. Ewald Engelen, associate professor

Dr. Pieter Terhorst, assistant professor

Dr. Mariangela Lavanga, post doc researcher Michiel Deinema, PhD student

Territories, Identities and Representations

Prof. Hans Knippenberg, programme leader Dr. Gertjan Dijkink, associate professor

Dr. Virginie Mamadouh, associate professor

Cathelijne de Busser, PhD student

Livelihoods, Environment and Governance

Prof. Isa Baud, programme leader

Prof. Ton Dietz, professor Human Geography Dr. Mario Novelli, assistant professor

Dr. Fred Zaal, assistant professor

Magali Chelpi, PhD student

September 5 OTB Technical University Delft

Housing Systems

Prof.dr. Peter Boelhouwer, programme leader

Dr.ir. Marja Elsinga, programme leader

Drs. Janneke Toussaint, junior researcher:

Sustainable Housing Transformations

Prof.dr.ir. Henk Visscher, programme leader

Dr.ir. Laure Itard, senior researcher

Drs. Henk-Jan van Mossel, junior researcher

Urban and Regional Development

Dr. Wil Zonneveld, programme leader

Dr. Dominic Stead, senior researcher

Dr. Evert Meijers, junior researcher

Urban Renewal and Housing

Prof.dr. Talja Blokland, programme leader

Dr. Marco van der Land, senior researcher

Drs. Wenda van der Laan Bouma-Doff, junior researcher

Mobility Studies

Dr. Milan Janic, programme leader
Dr. Bart Wiegmans, senior researcher
Rob Konings, junior researcher

GIS Technology

Prof.dr.ir. Peter van Oosterom, programme leader
Dr.ir. Sisi Zlatanova, senior researcher:
Ir. Maarten Vermeij, junior researcher

September 6 URU, University of Utrecht

Faculty Board and Management URU

Prof. Bert van der Zwaan (dean Faculty of Geosciences)
Prof. Oedzge Atzema (vice-dean Faculty of Geosciences)
Prof. Ronald van Kempen (director of Research URU)
Dr. Han Floor (member of the board URU)

URU-1: Urban Geography and Planning

Prof. Martin Dijst (programme leader URU-1 and theme leader sub-programme Spatial Mobility and Urban Development; professor of Urban Geography)
Dr. Stan Geertman (theme leader sub-programme Geo-Information for Spatial Planning Support; associate professor Geo-information Systems)
Prof. Ronald van Kempen (theme leader sub-programme Urban Social Divisions, Housing and Culture; professor of Urban Geography)
Prof. Luuk Boelens (professor of Urban and Regional Planning)
Dr. Tim Schwanen (assistant professor Spatial Mobility and Urban Development)

URU-2: Economic Geography

Prof. Ron Boschma (programme leader URU-2; professor of Economic Geography)
Dr. Koen Frenken (programme leader URU-2; assistant professor Economic Geography)
Prof. Frank van Oort (professor of Economic Geography)
Dr. Veronique Schutjens (assistant professor Economic Geography)

URU-3: Geography, Development and Representation

Dr. Paul van Lindert (programme leader URU-3; theme leader Regional Development in a Global Context; associate professor Development Studies)
Prof. Rob van der Vaart (programme leader URU-3; theme leader Cultural Geography/ Representations of Space and Place; professor of Regional Geography)
Dr. Guus van Westen (assistant professor Development Studies)
Dr. Gery Nijenhuis (assistant professor Development Studies)
Dr. Hans Renes (assistant professor Historical Geography)

URU-4: History of Cartography

Dr. Peter van der Krogt (programme leader URU-4)
Dr. Marco van Egmond (researcher History of Cartography)

September 7 GaP, Radboud University Nijmegen

Board and management research institute

Prof. Hans Mastop (dean)
Maurice Bouwens (faculty administration)
Prof. Rob van der Heijden (as cluster manager)

Governance and Places

Prof. Rob van der Heijden, programme coordinator
Dr. Arnoud Lagendijk, programme coordinator
Prof. Huib Ernste, management
Prof. Pieter Leroy, management

Research planning and coordination

Dr. Stefanie Dühr

Dr. Henk van Houtum

Dr. Erwin van der Krabben

Dr. Ton van Naerssen

Dr. Mark Wiering

The evaluation committee was also, less formally, given poster presentations by groups of PhD students at each institute; and these were followed by a group discussion with each set of PhD students.

Prof. Ehlers was not present at the interviews and site visit of the URSI institute in Groningen. Prof. Longley was only present at the interviews and site visit of the OTB institute in Delft.

Each site visit ended with an oral report to the respective University or Faculty Board.

1.5 Independence

All members of the committee signed a statement of independence to safeguard that they would assess the quality of the institute and research programmes in an unbiased and independent way. Any existing personal or professional relationships between committee members and programmes under review were reported and discussed in the committee meeting. The committee concluded that there were no close relations or dependencies and that there was no risk in terms of bias or undue influence.

1.6 Procedures followed by the committee

The committee proceeded according to the SEP. Prior to the committee meeting, each programme was assigned to a first and a second reviewer, who formulated a preliminary assessment. The final assessments are based on the documentation provided by the institutes, the key publications and the interviews with the management and representatives of the programmes. After the interviews the committee discussed the scores and comments and made draft texts. The texts were finalised through email exchanges. The final draft was presented to the institutes on October 1, 2007. The comments of the institutes on this draft were discussed in the committee and led to changes in the report on a number of points. The final report was presented to the Boards of the participating universities.

The committee used the rating system of the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP). The meaning of the scores is described in Appendix 2.

1.7 Some remarks concerning the ratings

The committee was obliged according to the SEP protocol to mark each research programme using four criteria. The committee wants to stress that it was almost impossible to express the merit of each of the programmes in these marks. Each mark combines a variety of reasons and evaluative remarks that can only be read in the argumentation and reflection on the programme as a whole. The marks also do not express the variation in contribution to the quantity and the quality of the output of the researchers in several programmes. The committee is aware of the fact that by rating the programmes, inevitably some very productive participating researchers may seriously be underrated.

In evaluating the programmes the committee took the recommendations of the last assessment into account. However, the committee did not attempt to use the ratings of the former committee as benchmarks against which to measure change, but marked the programmes according to the indications as given in the appendix. Since the array of marks cover 20 programmes spread across no fewer than 5 institutes, the committee's

assessments incorporated a very strong comparative element across the set of (often very disparate) programmes. It is important to remark in this respect that a lower mark on one of the criteria does not mean that the programme did not make any progress, or is achieving less than six or four years ago. The marks have to be understood in the actual context.

We evaluated the quality of the research outputs of the institutes and programmes with respect to the standards of world-class benchmarks – i.e the types of world-class outputs that top international universities, institutes and research programmes would be expected to produce. Publishing in international outlets is international standard, it is not necessarily world class. Research universities and research programmes accept that nowadays publishing internationally is the minimum basic standard for a viable research programme. The distinction between world class and international publications is important. The very top Urban and Regional programmes in the Netherlands are hitting the world-class benchmarks almost all of the time, while a second group of programmes, hit these benchmarks very regularly. Some programmes only hit national benchmarks.

In the opinion of the committee the criterion relevance should be interpreted as being relevant to society. Scientific relevance is assessed by the criterion quality.

A last remark concerns the marks for quantity. The average research output of the institutes is not high compared to Anglosaxon standards. Clearly, it would be inappropriate to make a crude comparison with the Anglosaxon academic world as a benchmark considering the different academic cultures and the fact that all scientific publications written in English are almost automatically international and Dutch publications are not. Nevertheless, if Dutch researchers rightly aim for international impact this comparison is one to which they will be sensitive. In rating the quantity the committee also took the following criteria into account:

- the number of tenured and non-tenured researchers involved. In the Dutch academic system PhD students are counted as academic staff but it can not be expected that PhD students publish as much as tenured staff, the same applies to the publication rate of post docs.
- the size of the publications (a monograph of 300 pages counts more than a article of 10 pages)
- the weight of the publications. A publication in a high level journal takes more effort than other publications and is normally more difficult to achieve. The committee is aware of the fact that this criterion for quantity partly overlaps with the mark for quality, but the principle of taking some account of the ‘substance’ rather than the mere number of publications is important.

The committee used a spreadsheet of the average output per programme in order to measure quantity as objective as possible.

The committee based its assessment of the programmes both on the written information in the self evaluation report, the presented key publications and the interviews it had with the programme representatives.

2.1 Introduction

In chapters 3-7 each of the institutes involved in this assessment is presented in a brief description followed by a short reflection of the committee on leadership, strategy and resources.

Each research programme is assessed on four criteria: quality and quantity of output, relevance and viability.

The next paragraph gives a general impression of the committee on institutes involved.

2.2 General impression

It was not in the brief of the committee to evaluate the research school NETHUR. The committee nevertheless wants to express its admiration of the PhD training NETHUR provides. The PhD students described the school as a place where they can meet each other and exchange their experiences. The school provides an academic environment and a source of a variety of views within the field of urban and regional research. The school gives the PhD students the opportunity to take a look behind the borders of their own research project and the methods they use. These possibilities are of great value for the training of the PhD students and the quality of their research. This collective resource remains one of the great strengths of the postgraduate context in the Netherlands – and one which academics in other European countries look at with admiration, as well as a little envy. It was clear that most – if not all – of the PhD students we spoke to had benefited from these wider training and networking opportunities and that that their work reflected the benefits. It was equally clear that the central support offered to enable postgraduate students to travel to conferences is another great virtue of the Netherlands context.

The co-operation between the senior members of the research school could be improved. Only a few of the involved seniors appeared to have developed research contacts evolving from NETHUR. The involved senior researchers could exploit more fully the network and the academic environment NETHUR provides.

In general the committee was impressed by the quality and the quantity of the output of the research programmes it evaluated. The research is in general of a good to very good international standard, some of the programmes are excellent and belong to the top echelons of European research in urban and regional studies. Within the international research community in urban and regional studies, the especial merits of work in the Netherlands are seen as its strong empirical base and its continuing strength in quantitative analysis, together with its recognition of the need to strike a careful balance between 'academic' theoretically-driven research and the application of such work to real-world issues especially in a Dutch context. These strengths were very evident in much of the work of individuals and programmes included in this assessment. Our abiding impression is that urban and regional studies in the Netherlands is in a strong internationally competitive position and that the research community is in good heart.

The institutes had generally worked seriously to meet the recommendations of the last review committee and had implemented many of the suggestions for improvements. That recognition was very encouraging for this committee.

3 URSI

3.1 The institute

URSI was established in 1999 building upon existing research as a result of the need to coordinate and focus existing research in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences. The key feature of the research is the study of space (be it country, region, city, or rural area) from the multidisciplinary perspective of geography, demography and spatial planning. URSI's main objectives are:

- to produce high quality scientific research, aimed at peers,
- to increase academic knowledge, and
- to disseminate this research to policymakers, NGOs and the general public, thus enhancing evidence-based interventions and policymaking.

In addition, capacity building of young researchers is a major objective.

The research programme of the institute 'Regional studies of population, economy and culture, spatial planning and policy making' consists of four sub-programmes, each of which is assessed below.

Total research staff per 1 January 2007 comprises 29.68 full time equivalents of which 19.05 PhDs and 4.9 non-tenured staff.

Director of the Urban Regional Studies Institute is prof. I.Hutter. She, together with the other programme leaders and involved professors, form the board of the institute. Prof Hutter is also member of the Faculty Board and vice dean for research.

3.2 Reflection on the institute

The composition of the research groups is primarily driven by the disciplinary backgrounds of the researchers and the education tasks in the undergraduate programme. This structure may not maximize the potential of the institute from a research point of view. The committee therefore supports the strategy of the management to strive for more flexibility in the research organisation. A single research programme with a few temporary themes must be possible for this institute. The committee would advise the management of the institute to stimulate greater co-operation between the research groups and to strengthen the innovative development of its 'research nucleus' policy by placing this appointee in a position apart from the research groups. Appointing the research nucleus was an excellent idea which appears to be bearing fruit, but the committee was somewhat surprised that his formal position is currently within one of the research groups.

Planning for declining areas could serve as a powerful and challenging integrative theme across the recent research groups.

Although the faculty of the University of Groningen is one of the biggest in the Netherlands, its research volume on senior level is limited. There is some imbalance between the number of tenured senior staff and the PhD students. An overburdening of tenured staff may evolve. The strategy of the institute to aim at an increase in direct funding for research and contract funding is feasible.

The committee supports the strategy of the institute to put more emphasis on international research.

The management combination of dean and vice-dean, who is responsible for the research strategy, works according to the committee very well. The committee got the impression of a vital institute with good rather short communication links.

The PhD students were all satisfied with the supervision and facilities the institute offers and were very positive about the training programme and additional value of NETHUR.

The committee was asked by the board of Groningen University to give an additional advice on the structure of the research programme. This advice has been offered in a separate management letter.

3.3 Review of the research programme Explaining spatial-economic change

The main focus of the programme *Explaining spatial-economic change* in the period under review was on two research themes: *demography of firms* and *regional labour market analysis*.

The first theme covers firm demography in general and the interplay between firm dynamics and regional development focused on firm migration, especially the decision-making process and the factors that determine these decisions. The research in this theme consists mainly of work in which hypotheses are formulated based on theory followed by empirical testing using sophisticated econometric methods.

The main focus of the research on regional labour markets has been on 'regional labour market dynamics' and 'the analysis of regional differences in labour productivity'. The research theme has a mainly quantitative focus, i.e. by applying survey analysis and regional analysis.

The decision to focus study on small firms is justified in terms of the significance of the small-firm sector to overall labour market developments where small firms and new firms represent the most dynamic element. This group is part of the spatial sciences and its research concerns the spatial impact of firm migration. Mergers of big firms have hardly any influence on space, although it would be interesting to include work looking at the potential centralizing effect that mergers and take-overs in the Netherlands may (or may not) have on changes in the spatial pattern of high-level jobs and the regional multiplier effects linked to supply chains.

Programme leader	Prof. J.van Dijk
Research staff 1-1-2007	5.35
Assessments:	Quality: 4.5
	Quantity: 4.6
	Relevance: 4.4
	Viability: 4.3

Explanation of the scores

- Quality The research of this group is of excellent quality. The research is at the forefront internationally, and has an important and substantial impact in the field of economic demography.
- Quantity The group is very productive. It produced in the reviewed period a disproportionately high quantity of both academic as well as professional publications.
- Relevance The social and economic impact of the work of this group is very good. The research of this group focused on the migration of firms gives insight in societally very relevant themes such as the way in which smaller firms are built and how jobs are produced.
- Viability The research group itself seems very integrated, but the links with the other groups in the institute could be improved. Research on firm demography, and especially on real estate, are emerging. The group has a long standing research reputation.

3.4 Review of the research programme *Determinants of population dynamics*

The programme *Determinants of population dynamics* focuses on population issues and demographic behaviours and outcomes. During the period under review, the programme included two intersecting research themes: 'Monitoring demographic change' and 'Reproductive health'. Research was not only conducted on traditional demographic topics such as fertility, migration and mortality, but also on reproductive health and HIV-AIDS and population and health. The group nurtures and exploits strong linkages with overseas researchers, including those based in India, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nepal. The scholarship has a strong theoretical focus that seeks to derive, test, and build lifecourse approaches that can utilise quantitative and qualitative research methods as appropriate, and make timely policy statements. The programme is very successful in attracting and graduating postgraduate students. The integration and contribution of masters' students (both national and international) is another key asset.

Two of the leading members of this programme group left in the period under review. However, at the time of the site visit, the group was again complete albeit with a relatively small complement of staff. While the programme encompasses the broad field of demography, complementarity in background and expertise is inherent in the staff of the programme. The group is clearly highly reflective about its work and about potential directions for future research (including the interesting possibility of expanding work on planning for economic decline). It would appear likely to be one of the groups that could gain considerable benefit from greater flexibility across the overall research of the institute. A strengthening of the focus on the 'spatial' could enhance linkages with other programs.

Programme director	Prof.dr I.Hutter	
Research staff 1-1-2007	7.73	
Assessments:	Quality:	4.5
	Quantity	4.4
	Relevance:	4.2
	Viability:	4.8

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The research of this group is competitive with and, at some points, at the international forefront; nationally the programme is a leading contributor of demographic knowledge. Indeed, it is recognized as one of the best demographic groups in Europe. The quality of research is very good to excellent, although the group must always strive to publish in the most visible outlets.
Quantity	The output quantity is very high, at some points at the international forefront. Considering the difficulties this group has faced in the review period with staff turnover, and the increased teaching and supervisory demands, the average annual level of output is admirable. This group especially published many refereed articles in high level journals. The number of PhD students supervised in the period of this assessment also adds to the high level of productivity of this group.
Relevance	The research of this group is of very high relevance to academics and policy-makers within the Netherlands and internationally, as reflected by the range and quality of outlets for research findings and the success this group has enjoyed in attracting contract funding. Debates on ageing, household diversity, fertility, and reproductive health and reproductive rights will deepen over the next decade, and those teams best able to drive contributions forward will have access to a diverse skill set, expertise that is demographic and non-demographic (particularly economic and cultural), and a sensitivity to theoretical pluralism.
Viability	The committee was particularly impressed by the strong team ethic and productive relations between members of this group. During the review

period the group had had to reinvent itself while retaining a commitment to its long standing traditions of demographic research. Moreover, the academic backgrounds and positive attitudes of group members inspire productive connections with other groups in the institute. With its commitment to combine the insights of formal demography with the challenges and theoretical possibilities of population studies, the committee sees considerable potential for the further growth of this group. This potential is likely to be realised as the team targets top international journals for publications (including *Demography* and *Population Space and Place*), and builds further on its membership in and leadership of international demographic research partnerships, clearly defines and articulates its contributions to diverse debates on health. It may be that the current size of the group does not approach the necessary critical mass to accomplish the attainment of international excellence across the board.

3.5 Review of the research programme *Planning for environmental quality*

The programme *Planning for environmental quality* is policy driven, with a strong focus on conceptual thinking at strategic level. Planning has a strong empirical side. There is a heavy investment in empirical research with relevance for society. Research themes in this programme are: Heritage Planning, Urban and Regional Planning, Energy and Environmental Health and Hygiene, Socio-ethical Side to Planning. A significant amount of research within the research programme takes place as part of larger consortia or research groups, nationally and internationally.

The programme builds on the heritage of long and established research in planning. Two of the pillars of this heritage have now left. The group decided that what they need is continuity in research themes and methods rather than a shift in focus. Theoretically, every researcher has his or her own individual focus. Hence there is some question about the benefit that derives from what is an enormously wide array of substantive interests and the weakness of the central organizing logic of 'complexity theory' which, to the committee, seemed not to be a very convincing peg on which to hang such diversity.

One of the researchers of this group has an institute-wide assignment as 'research nucleus'. It is his task to stimulate interlinkages between the programmes and to identify new important research topics. The research nucleus is often the starting point of new PhD projects. While the committee was impressed by the decision to make this appointment, it remained unconvinced that it was most logical to connect the post to a single research group.

Programme director	Prof. dr H. Voogd/prof.dr G. de Roo	
Research staff 1-1-2007	10.55	
Assessments:	Quality:	3.2
	Quantity:	3.9
	Relevance:	3.8
	Viability:	3.6

Explanation of the scores

Quality The output of this group remains mainly national, the impact of the output is internationally rather limited but recently improving. The research is nationally at the forefront with a high impact in policy making. The research fields of this group are broad. This group does some innovative research. The committee recommends that it should focus more on these subjects.

Quantity The quantity of the output is high, nationally at the forefront and internationally competitive. The group produces especially many professional publications.

- Relevance The research of this group does have a high impact at a policy level. The relevance of the research is therefore good to very good.
- Viability The viability of the group is good. The research subjects will stay relevant for a long time. The age composition of the research team is promising.

3.6 Review of the research programme Making Places

The mission of the sub-programme *Making Places* is to conduct research on cultural geographic issues, particularly on how the meaning of and attachment to places is constructed, reproduced, and represented. Since its independence in 2005 the group has pursued three substantive themes: 'Ruralities', 'Heritage' and 'Belonging and Identities'. The first theme evolved from a long-standing interest in rural issues with a traditional focus on rural development enriched by linking it to the cultural constructions of rurality. The focus of the second theme is the cultural meanings of heritage places and links with the interests of colleagues in Spatial Planning. While the third theme of research tackles diverse debates on belonging and identities, members of the team have begun to recover Dutch empirical material (prisons, roadside memorials, eco-village) on questions of inclusion and exclusion, which have the potential to problematise long-standing concepts of community.

Indeed, an emphasis within the programme is on empirical research, which stands it in good stead to contribute ground-truths to a burgeoning cultural geography literature. While many of the research methods used are traditional, some of the team have used international collaborative networks to experiment with and develop innovative methodologies that are both fit for purpose and include audio- and video-inquiry. A number of activities and projects are directed at answering questions from stakeholders in society. As above, the group has shared interests with colleagues from most other programmes at URSI, although a weakness of such permeability is the lack of a clear conceptual framework that can lend consistency to research agendas and help build external reputation.

This is a newly independent and diverse group that generally acts like a team. Leadership structures were opaque and it was rather unclear to the committee the degree to which all team members held to the mantra of "curiosity driven research" or what was intended by such a thrust. The group has recently been enlarged with a chair financed by the ministry of Agriculture, and the arrival of a new postdoctoral student and a new PhD student will boost numbers further. The group's strategy of improving the number of academic publications in prominent international peer review journals is particularly apposite.

Programme director	Prof.dr P.Huigen
Research staff 1-1-2007	2.3
Assessments:	Quality: 3.3
	Quantity: 3.2
	Relevance: 3.2
	Viability: 3.0

Explanation of the scores

- Quality The research of this group is mainly national. Some of the publications are internationally competitive and some research is very promising, especially around the belonging and identities theme. The committee concurred with the group's own assessment that the preponderance of professional publications is a current weakness.
- Quantity There is unhealthy variety in the productivity of the researchers in this group. While some are highly productive the general output level although good is not really competitive on an international level.

- Relevance The research of this group is relevant as shown by the quantity of professional publications. Moreover, there is currently unrealized potential for the group to contribute further to cultural geography debates given the rich empirical material they are beginning to amass.
- Viability The group is small and the research focus is largely undefined. As the group grows and debates its own identity it might usefully carve out a smaller number of niches that make sense within the institute as a whole, respond to the currently available expertise in certain areas, and help lead scholarship on cultural topics. Understanding the many “cultural logics” of late capitalism, neoliberalism and post-colonialism attracts a great deal of effort from across the social sciences and humanities not as stand-alone topics but as integral to transformations in economy, inequality, population change, governance and so on. It may be that the desire to nurture and expand the most promising and challenging research has implications for the position of this group in the whole institute.

4 Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies, University of Amsterdam

4.1 The institute

The Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies (AMIDSt) founded on January 1 2004 is one of the five research institutes of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of the University of Amsterdam and a major international research institute in the areas of human geography, spatial planning and policies, and international development studies. AMIDSt is a merger between the Amsterdam Study centre for the Metropolitan Environment (AME) and the Amsterdam research institute for Global Issues and Development Studies (AGIDS). AMIDSt focuses on the research themes of Northern metropolitan environments (Europe, North America) and Southern metropolitan and rural areas (Asia, Africa). In addition AMIDSt intends to develop new comparative research approaches to link fields and themes of these worlds.

Over 40 scholars and 30-40 PhD researchers from different disciplines (human geography, physical planning and non-Western sociology and anthropology) work at AMIDSt. They are organized into five research groups, each of which is assessed below. Each research group focuses on a coherent set of related topics. Some staff members participate in more than one research group. Two of the research groups are relatively small. In the near future several vacancies will arise in the research programme territories and identities and representations as a consequence of retirement. The institute is considering merging the rest of this group with the programme Space and Economy and will accordingly reprofile the chair Political and Cultural Geography, which will become vacant in 3 years.

The mission of AMIDSt is to play a significant role in international and national scientific and societal debates on the spatial dimensions of social reality in Northern and Southern contexts.

Core issues in the research programme are: polarization, accessibility, sustainability, governance, competitiveness, territorial identities, trans-national migration and livelihoods.

The institute has continued to focus on the former AME and AGIDS research themes of Northern metropolitan environments (Europe, North America) and Southern metropolitan and rural areas (Asia, Africa). In addition AMIDSt intends to develop new comparative research approaches to link fields and themes. It therefore introduced two cross-cutting themes as a step towards creating crossovers and innovative projects: Coastal Lowlands and Transnationalism.

Director of the research institute is prof. dr R. Kloosterman. The director is formally responsible for the institute's research programme and the allocation of the research budget. The director discusses questions regarding substantive aspects of the institute's research programme with the programme leaders. Formal responsibility for the content and progress of the research programme and the monitoring and supervision of the research activities of the members of the respective groups lies with the programme leaders. The programme leader also carries the main responsibility for generating extra funding through NWO and contract research.

4.2 Reflection on the institute

The strategy of the institute to cross-fertilize and combine research focused on the Northern metropolitan areas and on the Southern metropolitan areas is promising and challenging, but it needs some more time to evaluate the achievements in this respect. The committee had the impression that the more practical reasons to merge the former institutes, size and budget, still dominate the present situation. The strategy by the institute to stimulate the two cross-themes by funding could certainly have a positive impact on more effective co-ordination.

The committee appreciates the managing model of the institute of top-down leadership and bottom-up competition. The research groups themselves however seem to be rather hierarchically structured. There is in the view of the committee a gap of staff in the middle level. The viability of the institute depends on the way that young talented researchers get promoted and take up positions in the future years. Staff members with potential should get the chance to move up. The committee advises the institute to make some strategic decisions to keep talented high potential researchers within the institute.

The strength of AMIDSt is in the opinion of the committee the broad combination of metropolitan studies and international development studies with a basis in comparative urban geography.

Merging the programmes Space and Economy and Territories, Identities and Representations is feasible. The profile of vacant chairs needs however some rethinking. The institute needs to consider that cultural geography is one of its high performing areas.

The committee got a very positive impression from the group of PhD students. The students regularly meet, have a lot of interaction with each other and benefit from that. The students were positive about the training programme NETHUR offers and reported on its stimulating environment and accessible supervisors and senior researchers. With the development of a graduate school in Amsterdam, it will be important to ensure that this is used as an opportunity to complement rather than substitute for the stimulating role that NETHUR training plays.

The facilities offered are sufficient. Students have the possibility to attend conferences, to organize seminars and to invite guest lecturers. There are some problems with the accessibility of specific journals and publications in the university library.

4.3 Review of the research programme Urban Geographies

The aim of the research programme *Urban Geographies* is to gain a better understanding of the complex, diverse and mutual relationships between the development of urban spaces and places, time-space behaviour, and individual life courses and life chances. The connections between these phenomena form the central focus of the programme. The researchers focus their study, within the theoretical framework of scholars such as Anthony Giddens, on the way that spaces and places affect social behaviour and social opportunities and on the way social behaviour and social interactions create and reshape spaces and places. Research in the field successfully combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Many aspects of the work – for example, on the neighbourhood effect and the changing nature and role of cities – are innovative and highly influential. Some of the methods being applied, not least the use of longitudinal approaches, are powerful ways in which to interpret spatial change. The high quality of the work is reflected in the programme's success in attracting large-scale external funding. Current projects of the programme are:

- urban dynamics and the emergence of the (creative) knowledge city
- life courses and time-space behaviour
- spatial inequalities, segregation, integration and neighbourhood effects

This programme is one of the larger groups of AMIDSt. The merger of the two former institutes had a positive effect on the research of this group, although it did not cause a major shift in focus.

Programme director	Prof. dr S. Musterd	
Research staff 2006	14.44	
Assessments:	Quality:	5.0
	Quantity:	4.5
	Relevance:	4.7
	Viability:	4.8

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The group built successfully and very strongly on the research focus it had before the merger. The strength of the subject has been carried over into the new context. The research of this group is internationally at the forefront. It is highly evaluated and internationally appreciated. The group contains some extremely impressive researchers. Some of the research done in this group concerns the cross-over themes of the institute. The quality of the research is assessed as excellent by the committee. The group has numerous research contacts in and outside the university and is active in the international academic community in this area. The merger and the input of new researchers in this group have been used to improve and strengthen the studied subjects.
Quantity	The productivity of the group is steady and very high. The committee rated the quantity of this programme very high to excellent because of the number of publications consistently appearing in high-level journals.
Relevance	The relevance of the research subjects is very high to excellent. The themes chosen are all to the point and important to developments in society. The high relevance is also reflected in the number of professional publications.
Viability	The group has a strong strategy and a strong leader. The group is continuously developing and very vital. The funding strategy is appreciated by the committee.

4.4 Review of the research programme Planning, Institutions and Transforming Space

The research group *Planning, Institutions and Transforming Spaces* investigates spatial and institutional processes of urban transformation, with a particular focus on the actions and planning strategies that are brought forward in response to the changing conditions of cities. The research group is particularly interested in the transformation of urban spaces and the innovation of planning institutions in the context of radical modernization and individualization at the beginning of the 21st century. The crucial themes of research concern the quest for legitimate and effective strategies of 'spatial planning and environmental policy' and the 'framing of urban mega projects' in the context of 'multi-levelled urban governance'. By stressing the dimensions of action and planning as objects of study, the research group takes a strictly scientific approach.

The situation after the merger is not very different from that before that date, but the merger brought a lot of potential, such as experience with governance in other contexts.

The group is involved in a research project on the cross-over theme Coastal Lowlands. The background of the researchers in this group is in planning theory and governance. The group reports a lot of interaction between researchers across the programme groups in the institute. The group also has valuable contacts with the political science department, especially the involvement of prof. Maarten Hajer from that department.

Programme director	Prof. dr W.Salet	
Research staff 2006	11.9	
Assessments:	Quality:	4.0
	Quantity	4.0
	Relevance:	3.5
	Viability:	3.3

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The research of this group has an impact on the international scene and is at the forefront nationally. The committee appreciates the way in which this group started with a completely different research strategy. The institutional approach is considered as a major contribution of this group.
Quantity	The productivity of this group is very high, nationally at the forefront and internationally competitive.
Relevance	The subjects studied by this group are relevant to society and directed at actual public issues as is demonstrated by the number of professional publications. The committee assessed the relevance of this research as good to very good, nationally leading.
Viability	The orientation and goals of this group are somewhat broad. The group appeared to have some difficulty in specifying the linkages between the studied issues. The committee would advise that it might focus more. Subjects such as 'Coastal Lowlands' and 'Transport' could prove challenging and promising future topics. The highly appreciated common framework on an institutional approach was however not reflected at all in the individual research projects. The vitality of this group is on the one hand very good. Research done by this group will certainly remain relevant for another decade. On the other hand the committee weighed the need for more focus and the proportion of NWO funding, which is rather low and needs improvement.

4.5 Review of the research programme *Space and Economy*

The aim of the research group *Space and Economy* is to analyse the interrelationship between space and economy from a perspective that stresses the salience of localized institutions and their impact in shaping different trajectories of socio-economic development. The main theoretical point of departure is, accordingly, the view that institutional structures to a large extent shape and mould the (economic) behaviour of actors.

The mission of the group is to contribute to the following debates in economic geography and planning:

1. How do institutional arrangements at different levels of scale mould and shape the impact of more general processes of globalization on concrete places (macro-meso perspective)?
2. How do internationally competitive local clusters of (post-)industrial activities emerge and how is competitive advantage reproduced over time (meso-meso perspective)?
3. How do actors (e.g. entrepreneurs) interact with local (opportunity) structures and what kind of resources do they deploy to get access to these opportunities (micro-meso perspective)?

The contributions of the group to the key debates are theoretical, in the sense that they suggest new ways of conceptualizing the relationship between economic activities and their spatial articulation by giving the institutional framework and long-term developments much prominence while recognizing the (partly contingent) role of actors.

The research group is relatively young both in age composition and in date of establishment.

All researchers of this group whether with a disciplinary background in economic geography or economic history are interested in a variety of subjects grounded on a theoretical basis. The substantive topics that the researchers focus on are cultural and financial industries and the role of cultural industry in the economy of the city. Their work concentrates on processes of convergence and divergence and questions like what is converging and what is diverging and why, as well as the direction and speed of the changes.

Programme director	Prof.dr R.Kloosterman
Research staff 2006	6.9
Assessments:	Quality: 3.7
	Quantity: 4.0
	Relevance: 3.5
	Viability: 3.7

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The quality of the publications of this group is high. The research is important, internationally competitive and nationally on the forefront. The research group is young and very promising. The committee expects that the group will within a short time achieve a higher level and strengthen its position in the international academic community in this area. The committee saw some very good publications but the quality of publications actually fell since 2004.
Quantity	The group is very productive. It has a very good record of publications both academic as well as professional.
Relevance	Subjects studied by this group are socially relevant. They address actual issues in the public debate and contribute to policy making. The topics being studied are currently very important, socially relevant and in vogue, but there is not much real evidence yet that this group is significantly influencing the debates around these topics. However, the committee expects this to improve significantly over the coming years.
Viability	This group has a lot of research expertise in the described field and is aware of the relevant developments. The focus of the group is on modern economic geography. The members of the group are very confident of the way they are proceeding. A point of concern is the hierarchical nature of the staff. The junior staff seems very dependent on the programme leader. However, the group includes some young promising very talented researchers. The committee expects this group to publish within five years at the highest level.

4.6 Review of the research programme Territories, Identities and Representations

The mission of the research programme *Territories, Identities and Representations* is to analyse the relationship between the changing territorial order of nation states, in terms of the control mechanisms that result in territorialisation, deterritorialisation, and reterritorialisation, on the one hand, and the meaning of territory in terms of human cultural forms such as ethnicity, language, religion, and identities, on the other hand. However, the main focus of the research programme continues to be on the changing territorial order of Europe, including Russia and other former Soviet republics, that is only a small component of the group's much larger, and theoretically compelling mission. Indeed, two issues in particular have the special attention of the research group: the growing importance of intra-state conflict indicating diminishing state control (control dimension) and declining state legitimacy (cultural dimension); a growing importance of religious identifications and its representations (cultural dimension) often

in competition with territorial identifications, national ones in particular. While both issues are studied in relation to each other at different spatial scales, current activities fall short of exploiting the potential of empirically rich case material for debates on the production of scale, and thus political and cultural change under globalization. Indeed, while established in 2004 when political and cultural geographers came together under one flag, the intellectual value-added from this alliance was not readily apparent to the committee. How are the team members better off by being part of a jointly constituted political-cultural group than before?

This programme group is relatively small. Size is partly a function of the dearth of outside funding, and the funding strategy of the group is aimed at 2nd stream money. It is self-conscious about its need to respect a long tradition of research in the University of Amsterdam on nationalism, nation-states and nation-building. There was a lack of appreciation of planning for change and a slight defensiveness about such a process. Key challenges for the group going forward include: articulating a clearer focus about its activities particularly in regard to debates it aspires to influence and lead; planning for the retirement of several senior and well respected members; planning the conceptual and practical bases for co-operating with other research groups in order to have more research volume and a wider variety of expertise; having a clearly defined leadership structure and opportunities for debate and change.

Programme director	Prof.dr H.Knippenberg	
Research staff 2006	6.8	
Assessments:	Quality:	3.4
	Quantity:	3.2
	Relevance:	3.1
	Viability:	3.0

Explanation of the scores

Quality	This group publishes in an internationally visible way organized around the idea of territories. In quite a few respects the researchers follow the political geography tradition although the relative scarcity of publications in recognized sub-disciplinary outlets is worrying. The overall profile of quality is hindered by great variability in outputs by staff members.
Quantity	The productivity of group members varied widely from excellent to poor but overall was good.
Relevance	The research subjects this group is studying are highly relevant to society and the actual public debate. The group has produced a lot of professional publications.
Viability	The research themes of this group are viable in theory, but will need to be integrated and combined in a greatly accelerated manner. Such planning for change needs to overcome the way that individual members of the group seemed quite unaware of what the others were doing. The age composition of the group will lead to a diminution of the group in the near future and an opportunity to anticipate change and plan accordingly, perhaps with roof-tile (pro-leptic) hirings around themes judged important by NWO, but left unfunded. Moreover, issues of political and cultural change under globalization necessarily involve economic change, and the committee saw potential for further discussion between the research programme Space and Economy and TIR over new projects and foci, particularly on issues of cultural economy.

4.7 Review of the research programme *Livelihoods, Environment and Governance*

The research programme *Livelihoods, Environment and Governance* (LEG) deals with international development studies, a trans-disciplinary field of studies. The programme combines human geography, sociology/anthropology and development planning, and

links up with other trans-disciplinary domains (like environmental studies) and more mono-disciplinary fields like development economics, and education studies. The mission of the group is to link livelihoods, environment and governance, by combining the study of capabilities with institutions at various scale levels and localities and showing scientists and policy makers in the domain of international development that geography matters and that spatial and scale differentiation in capabilities and institutions is crucial to understand the impact of current globalization processes.

The researchers focus on the way people cope with living in relatively harsh and risky environments, both in metropolitan/urban areas and in rural areas.

The composition of the staff researching on LEG topics changed greatly in the last decade, partly due to retirements.

Programme director	Prof.dr I.Baud	
Research staff 2006	18.13	
Assessments:	Quality:	3.7
	Quantity:	4.0
	Relevance:	3.8
	Viability:	3.8

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The quality of the research and publications of this group is largely competitive on an international level and at the forefront nationally. The committee assessed the quality of the research as good to very good. The research group provided some additional information concerning research contacts and citation index results, which underlines the impression of the committee. Some of the publications of this group have an enormous impact. The diversity and dispersion of research contacts is however huge. A further focus on a more limited range of themes could greatly enhance the future impacts of this group's research results.
Quantity	The productivity of this group is very high. The research resulted in a lot of publications both on academic and on professional level. In the mark for this criterion the committee weighed the size and the impact of the publications.
Relevance	The societal relevance of the research subjects this group studies is very high, nationally leading and internationally competitive. In the Netherlands this group has a great social impact in terms of advisory positions to the Ministry of Development Cooperation. The heterogeneity in intellectual focus however diminishes the relevance somewhat. The committee had some difficulty to identify the 'story this group wants to tell' with its research.
Viability	This research group is the largest one of AMIDSt and can build on a long and diverse history of research in development studies at the University of Amsterdam. The group has managed to build a coherent programme around the government and livelihood topic in each of the five research clusters of the group. This group plays an intermediating role in the merging process of the rest of AMIDSt. There is evidence of lively internal debate on strategic issues and of good leadership within the group, although there remains a challenge to introduce a greater degree of focus to its various research activities. The strategy of the group to fade out the emphasis on health issues makes sense in regard to the fact that other institutes in the University of Amsterdam are more focused on those issues. The committee endorses the strategy to establish a stronger education and development section. Further expansion of PhD activities will improve the viability of this group.

OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies, Delft University of Technology

5

5.1 The institute

OTB is an independent interfaculty research institute of the Technical University Delft (TUD). OTB is a hybrid organization in the sense that it combines research that is directly funded with contract research. The aim of the institute is to maintain a largely balanced relationship between directly funded and contract based activities.

The main objective of the OTB is to undertake fundamental and applied research in the areas of housing, urban studies, mobility studies and geo-information studies. The research activities are both national and international in scope and deal with the built environment with reference to aspects of the technological sciences, the policy and management sciences, the behavioural sciences, spatial sciences and the application of information and communication technology. The focus of the OTB 's research portfolio is sustainable urban development. A key feature of OTB is the close relationship between theory and practice. The research strategy is aimed at high societal and strategic issues. The OTB 's research activities for the period 2003-2008 were divided into seven research programmes, of which six are assessed by the committee. The programmes are extremely diverse, but all relate in some way to the built human environment. All programmes are both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in their structure.

The strategy of the institute has developed since the last review of the institute in 2003 partly based on the recommendations of the review committee. In the spectrum of 'fundamental research, strategic/basic research, applied research and consultancy research', the focus of the institute has shifted to more fundamental and more basic research, with less applied research. The research assessment is limited to the fundamental and basic research of the institute. The output and input of the applied research contracts and projects is not included in the self-assessment report.

The acquisition strategy is aimed at long-term contracts and involvement in long-term research programs like the BSIK programs. At the moment the institute has more demand for research projects than they can manage, it is therefore possible to make strategic choices.

Before 2003 the institute had no PhD researchers, the policy is now aimed at 8 dissertations per year. Another shift concerns the increasing number of foreign scholars and the increase in the number of professorships to eleven. Next year another three will follow.

The institute is only indirectly concerned with education per se. The management of the institute however finds the links with education important and is aiming at 20 % involvement in education for the senior researchers through agreements with the education departments of the TUD.

The programme groups of the institute made their own research programmes and are responsible for both sufficient output on the level of fundamental and basic research as well as acquiring contracts and results on the level of applied research. The researchers on programme level co-operate with scholars in several faculties of TUD.

The management of OTB consists of:

Scientific director: prof. Peter Boelhouwer

Director: prof. Willem Korthals Altes

Members: Henny Coolen and Pierre van Zinnen.

Total research staff in 2006 is 54.64 fte.

The management uses a policy budget, to implement strategic measurements like investing in a programme and establishing PhD positions. The management meets every six weeks with each of the programme leaders to discuss the progress in terms of budgets, contracts and research results.

5.2 Reflection on the institute

The committee is of the opinion that OTB has achieved many of the goals it set itself since the last review. It responded positively to a majority of the recommendations. The facilities and housing the institute offers to the researchers are very good, especially in comparison with other departments and research institutes the committee visited. These facilities express in a way the special position of the institute in this evaluation. The committee is aware of this special position and of the fact that the assignments and merits of an institute like OTB are not fully covered by the evaluation protocol used in this assessment.

In light of this the committee has some recommendations concerning OTB as an institute. According to the self-evaluation report OTB has put a lot of effort in establishing co-operation between the programmes resulting – among others – in joint publications and joint projects. On the basis of the interviews the committee concluded that there is still a way to go in this aspect. It would recommend that the institute continues to encourage cross-fertilization and interconnection between the programmes. The variability in research quality in the institute is enormous, as might be expected. Some of the programmes are heavily reliant on contract funding. Other programmes are internationally visible and publishing at a high level. Researchers in the institute could benefit more from each other's experiences and expertise. The committee would recommend that it should aim at more strategic appointments. It seems that OTB is not exploiting all the potential it has.

PhD students could profit from a structured and regular inter-programme seminar where they have to present their work and discuss the work of their peers. The PhD students, the committee met, were very focused on their own subjects and were not used to thinking of the implications of their research in a broader social science context.

OTB seems to benefit very little from the membership of NETHUR in terms of research co-operation or PhD training and exchange of experiences. There would be benefit in ensuring that PhD students take fullest advantage of the opportunity of attending training courses offered by NETHUR and other research schools to ensure that they gain from contact with postgraduates from other institutes. Senior researchers of OTB could also take advantage of co-operation with other institutes and researchers participating in NETHUR to broaden their scope and their academic network.

5.3 Review of the research programme Housing Systems

The objectives of the *Housing Systems* research programme are to examine and explain the manner in which housing systems function, therefore contributing to the development of theory, and playing a prominent part in society's debate on housing. The housing system is defined as the combination of housing market, government influence and institutional context. The following themes are studied within this group:

- The development of housing systems
- Financial and economic aspects of the housing market
- Housing preferences
- Housebuilding (residential construction) market

The central research question of this programme can be summarised as: 'How housing systems function'

The programme group has set itself the following objectives:

- to become more theory oriented
- to focus more on the international academic forum
- to increase the output and the proportion of teaching
- to keep its position in contract research
- to combine academic and societal research questions
- more long term contracts
- more invitations for guest lectures
- to be invited to participate on basis of their special expertise

The general strategy of the group to position itself as an interesting partner for contract research is to raise a problem or a question either in a professional journal or at a conference aimed at a broader audience. The most attractive contract partners are National Associations or umbrella organisations.

Programme director	Prof.dr P.J.Boelhouwer/Dr.M.G.Elsinga		
Research staff 2006	8.35		
Assessments:	Quality:	4.3	
	Quantity:	3.9	
	Relevance:	4.5	
	Viability:	4.4	

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The programme Housing systems is in the opinion of the committee in many ways the solid core of OTB. The research is internationally visible of a good level and setting a standard. The research subjects of this group have many interdisciplinary links and many approaches to explore. The group co-operates with other groups in OTB for instance with the Urban Renewal and Housing Group and has an extensive national and international academic network. Given the range and strengths of the group, there would be a strong argument for it to aim at producing a major book. This would give it scope both to explore the wider complexity of the theme as well as raising the profile of the group's work.
Quantity	The productivity of this research group is good at a national level. The group publishes a significantly high ratio of professional articles.
Relevance	There is a lot of demand for this kind of research as is shown by the number of contracts and the amount of professional publications. The research of this group is aimed at actual issues in society and links to actual policies and the public debate. The social relevance of the issues studied by this group is assessed as very good to excellent, because of the impact they have had on policy and practice debates in the Netherlands and internationally.
Viability	The research group is vital. The group has a good age composition and contains promising young researchers. The demand for this kind of research will last. The group plays a crucial role in the research contribution of OTB.

5.4 Review of the research programme Sustainable Housing Transformations

The mission of the research programme *Sustainable Housing Transformations* is to perform strategic research in the areas of sustainable and healthy housing, strategic housing stock policy and technical management, building regulations and quality assurance. Steered by societal issues the group wants to create innovative solutions for policy, and building and maintenance processes, based on scientific research. The programme is structured around three themes:

- Sustainable and Healthy Housing

- Strategic Housing Stock Policy and Technical Management
- Building Regulations and Quality Assurance

The composition of the group is multidisciplinary with expertise in architecture, construction, civil engineering, mechanical engineering and some social sciences.

The group has formulated the following ambitions:

- From short-term to long-term research
- More scientific publications, the target is 18 publications in 2009
- Two dissertations per year
- Setting the agenda in international scientific working groups

Programme director	Prof.dr H.J.Visscher/prof.dr A.F.Thomsen	
Research staff 2006	10.25	
Assessments:	Quality:	3.4
	Quantity:	3.9
	Relevance:	3.8
	Viability:	3.4

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The core of the programme is technical. The group has set itself some ambitious targets, which are halfway achieved. The academic reputation of this group is at this moment mainly national, its ambition is to become a major player internationally. The focus of the group is in the opinion of the committee somewhat narrow, lacking a real input from social sciences. 'Sustainability' is defined narrowly in terms of energy consumption and the quality of housing is technically defined. Yet, neither sustainability nor quality can be understood effectively without consideration of the use that is made of buildings and the behaviours that help to determine how users define quality. It would make sense to broaden the definitions and to increase the number of social scientists.
Quantity	The productivity of the researchers involved in this group improved over the last four years.. The productivity is assessed as good and improving. The group developed a publication strategy and investigated relevant academic journals and publication channels.
Relevance	There is a lot of demand for this kind of research as is shown by the number of contracts and the amount of professional publications. The research of this group is aimed at actual issues in society and links to actual policies and the public debate. The relevance of the research of this group is assessed as very good, nationally at the forefront.
Viability	The group should benefit more from interaction with the other groups of the institute both in terms of using its expertise to contribute to other themes, but also to make good use of the social science expertise available within the institute. The committee is positive about the actions this group takes to develop a new research programme in co-operation with other parties. The appointment of one of the researchers as professor could have a positive effect on the vitality and dynamics in this group. The committee could not yet evaluate the results of these actions

5.5 Review of the research programme Urban and Regional Development

The mission of the research programme *Urban and Regional Development* is to gain an acknowledged position within the national and international scientific community in the area of urban and regional development. The emphasis of the programme is on configurations of urban and regional development and activities, and the pluricentric nature of decision- making structures. The research in the programme covers various

scales, ranging from local to European. Theme groups within the programme are established along the dimension of spatial (physical) developments and spatial governance.

Spatial development is largely concerned with an empirical analysis and explanation of urban structures and space usage in relation to spatial behaviour of households, businesses and other organizations, including activity and mobility patterns. The analysis relies on both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Spatial governance is concerned with the analysis of current policy-making processes (and effects) and policy definition (content and concepts), the assessment of underlying theoretical notions and the evaluation of policy options. Different research methods are used, with an emphasis on qualitative research.

The achievements of this group in the reviewed period are described as a high output, a culture of debate, interest in each other's work, collaboration with other departments of the TUD (e.g. architecture and TPM) and with euroregional institutes. For the future the group envisions probably a new chair in 2008, 3 completed PhD theses, 2 new PhD students, participation in FP7 project en ESPON until 2013, systematic involvement in education through an own module in a masterprogramme.

Programme director	dr. W. Zonneveld	
Research staff 2006	8.1	
Assessments:	Quality:	3.8
	Quantity:	4.2
	Relevance:	3.3
	Viability:	3.1

Explanation of the scores

Quality	This group is good at attracting and conducting contract research. The quality of this programme is assessed as very good, nationally at the forefront, internationally competitive. However, it lacks a clear vision on the research programme and an intellectual and academic core. The group is developing new research themes. One of the strong aspects of the group is its research on Travel Behaviour, Transport, and Mobility. The other themes are in the opinion of the committee too narrowly specified, with the exception of the work of the two senior professors, the rest of the research programme apart from transport and mobility looks somewhat thin.
Quantity	The productivity of this group is very good, internationally at the forefront. Especially the output of this group on Travel Behaviour, Transport and Mobility is very good.
Relevance	There is a lot of demand for this kind of research as is shown by the number of contracts and the amount of professional publications. The research of this group is aimed at actual issues in society and links to actual policies. The relevance of the research is assessed as good, nationally at the forefront.
Viability	Inevitably, a significant part of the output and direction of the work of the programme reflect the important role played by two internationally highly respected professors who have reached or are approaching the end of their active research involvement in OTB. Their role may be difficult to replicate in maintaining the programme's impact in the future. The viability of this group depends on some strategic hiring decisions. There is a task for this group to develop a stronger conceptual and theoretical framework for the research programme in the future. It is in the opinion of the committee vital for this group to recruit a new professor with a strong theoretical background and a clear vision on developments in the field.

5.6 Review of the research programme Urban Renewal and Housing

The *Urban Renewal and Housing* research programme is concerned with the ways in which residential districts function and change over time. Based on three thematic approaches, the programme seeks to contribute to the international academic debate in this area, and to play a prominent role in the national academic and public debates. The emphasis is therefore on research at the interstices of science, policy and practice. Although there is a strong coherence in the various research activities and interests in the department, the programme is divided into three themes that cover transitions and that aim to identify factors that help contribute to sustainable change:

- urban renewal
- social and spatial integration in residential neighbourhoods
- organization of urban renewal

The programme tries to tie academic research and applied research closely together.

This programme is relatively new and is a merger of two themes originating from urban studies and one from housing systems. The subject of this programme was before 2003 primarily aimed at consulting. Since 2003 a shift has been made to a strategic long-term research agenda, located in-between academia and contract research.

The research agenda is the starting point for this group.

The programme leader invests heavily in developing a vibrant research community and has paid a lot of attention to the need to develop a lively research culture in the group. This has helped to create a genuinely interdisciplinary group, alive to theoretical debate especially in the field of social relations.

The group has already achieved a steady increase in publications and an extension of roles in other parts of academia.

It has set the following goals for the next years:

- nurture vital academic culture
- continue and expand international collaboration
- full time chair
- increase number and quality international refereed articles
- stimulate interdisciplinarity and methodological pluralism keeping a strong thematic focus.

Programme director	Prof.dr T. Blokland and A. Ouwehand	
Research staff 2006	7.4	
Assessments:	Quality:	4.0
	Quantity	3.7
	Relevance:	4.1
	Viability:	4.4

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The quality of the output of this group is very good, is aimed at an international forum and has a lot of potential to grow. The research of this group is quite influential internationally.
Quantity	The productivity of this group is as yet not as high as it could become.
Relevance	There is a lot of demand for this kind of research as is shown by the number of contracts and the amount of professional publications. The research of this group is aimed at actual issues in society and links to actual policies. Researchers of this group appear frequently in newspapers and public debates.
Viability	The viability of this group is very good. It has a strong leadership, the strategy is farsighted. The group has a clear vision. The committee experienced this as especially positive. Potentially this is a very lively group. The committee saw a young vibrant group full of ideas and is of the opinion

that this group will grow. The group needs to have a full professor, this would give an additional impetus and direction to what is a very promising research development.

5.7 Review of the research programme *Mobility Studies*

This research of the programme *Mobility Studies* deals with sustainability and reliability of freight (and passenger) transport systems/networks aiming at understanding transport processes, the role of particular players in them, and their contributions to short- and long-term sustainable development systems. The focus of the research is to investigate the sustainability and reliability of intermodal freight transport systems/networks as an alternative to pure road transport haulage, the internal-operator and social feasibility of hub-and-spoke transport networks in the intermodal barge and air (passenger) transport, and behaviour of transport operators under changing conditions, but particularly in cases when being affected by the internal and external disruptions compromising the reliability of their services.

The three research themes of the group are:

- sustainable and reliable intermodal freight transport systems/networks
- feasibility of hub-and-spoke transport networks, and
- behaviour of suppliers of transport services under changing conditions

The approach of this group distinguishes itself from the Urban and Regional Development group by its systems approach, while the URD group has a behavioral perspective. There is still co-operation between the groups.

The group has a low funding record and is trying to improve its funding strategy.

Programme director	Dr M.Janic	
Research staff 2006	3.93	
Assessments:	Quality:	4.0
	Quantity:	4.2
	Relevance:	3.9
	Viability:	3.2

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The research programme is solid and internationally visible and competitive. The researchers are internationally highly profiled and publish in high quality journals. It is however not entirely clear how the group positions itself in the academic community on the subject of transport. The basic work of this group concerns transport systems. The committee was pleased with the work of this group, but the researchers seemed to be rather passive and lacked an overall mission.
Quantity	The productivity is reaching international benchmarks both for academic and professional publications.
Relevance	The subjects of research of this group are socially very relevant not only in view of the overall globalization process but also because of the strategic position of the Netherlands in this development. The group is asked on a regular basis to give key-note lectures and to participate in international projects.
Viability	The position of the group within OTB is less clear. The committee would endorse the actions already undertaken by this group. It would be strengthened by establishing a real focused chair and hiring a professor from outside to help develop a strategy especially aimed at acquiring NWO grants.

5.8 Review of the research programme GIS Technology

The research area of the programme *GIS Technology* focuses upon the most important innovations in GIS technology, that characterise the development and implementation of infrastructure concepts for handling geo information. Through a combination of analysis of specific GIS applications and basic GIScience research, the group identifies and rectifies deficiencies in current technology and knowledge gaps. Through basic scientific research, improvements and solutions are developed that are tested in practice. The widespread innovation of Spatial Information Infrastructures (SII) is leading to very considerable increases in the number of professional and lay end-users. The research of the section is applied into two application-oriented theme groups: *Crisis Management* and *Spatial Information infrastructure*. The mission of the group is to underpin the realization of the SII by laying its technological foundations.

This group consists mainly of engineers. The researchers frequently co-operate with user organisations and industries. They participate in a 4-year BSIK programme and in 10 further projects, mainly as programme leader. The group has many partnerships with the ICT industry.

All publications of the group are available on the website.

Programme director	Prof.dr P.J.M. van Oosterom	
Research staff 2006	8.39	
Assessments:	Quality:	4.6
	Quantity:	3.2
	Relevance:	4.6
	Viability:	4.6

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The quality of the output of this group is excellent. The work of this group is at the forefront internationally, and makes a very important, substantial and wide-ranging impact upon the field.
Quantity	The productivity of the group is low, but the impact and weight of the publications is very high. The productivity of this group however can be improved.
Relevance	Both the basic and the applied research of this group are aimed at actual issues in society and are applicable to actual policies. The research skills that are core to this group's activities are also very relevant for the other programmes in the institute and there is co-operation in several projects. However, the group does not have the resources to support a wide-ranging service function, and indeed this would not be a strategic use of resource.
Viability	Research in this field – a more appropriate title might be geo-information science – will remain very relevant. The contribution of the group's dynamic and very visible programme leader is seen as pivotal to continued development of the group's highly valued output and its high international impact. The group itself is aware of the need to develop and attract new young and eager researchers, particularly through its teaching contributions. This aspect deserves attention, as well as the improvement of the output quantity.

Urban and Regional research centre Utrecht URU, University of Utrecht

6

6.1 The institute

The Urban and Regional research centre Utrecht (URU) is the Research Institute of the Department of Human Geography & Urban and Regional Planning. It is part of the Faculty of Geosciences at Utrecht University. URU aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of urban and regional change on the one hand, and of the spatiotemporal behaviour of individuals, households, and firms in various geographical contexts on the other. The relationship between the changing spatial configurations of land uses and the spatiotemporal behaviour of actors and the ways in which this relationship is managed forms the umbrella of the URU research programme.

Changing spatial structures and spatiotemporal behaviour and the relationship between these two, together with the challenge to manage these dynamics, can be considered the key topics of the research activities of URU. The research seeks to come to grips with the complexity of urban society by developing research ideas, testing theories, developing new hypotheses, evaluating policies, and formulating new perspectives on spatial scales varying from global and national to regional and local. The research is structured in four sub-programmes each of which is assessed below. Two of these research programmes i.e. 'Urban geography and Planning' and 'Geography, Development and Representation' are relatively new mergers of a number of smaller research programmes.

The institute can be described as a traditional geography department. It faced serious cut-backs in the past years, which had an impact on the number of senior staff, many of whom left with an early retirement arrangement. At the same time the number of students increased with as a result a high teaching load reaching an average of 70% working time. The institute has an active policy to divide the teaching and research tasks according to the capacities of the individual scholars. The Faculty hired temporary staff to decrease the teaching load of the tenured staff. These measures helped to reduce the extreme cases of teaching over-load, but still the burden remained high. It is a continuous fight for the management of the institute to find a good balance between research and teaching for each researcher and for the research institute as a whole. Teaching is essential in the eyes of the faculty management but should not hinder research. The management injected money to achieve that. The Faculty however does not want to appoint teachers without any research task. The essential characteristic of academic degree programmes, i.e. the combination of research and education, has to be maintained.

Currently URU's research staff consists of over 100 people (33.23 research fte).

Director of the institute is prof. Ronald van Kempen. The director of research is in charge of the research institute and has full responsibility for its research policy and research programme. Staff and budget matters fall under the remit of the Head of the Department of Human Geography & Urban and Regional Planning. Together with three other members of the research group the director forms a daily management team for URU.

The strategy of the institute is to use the research programmes of URU as a frame to evaluate research proposals. However not all promising and innovative proposals outside this frame will be rejected out of hand. The institute is aiming at increasing the research

time of the involved researchers. Its strategy to do so is to invest in promising research proposals and projects and to find budgets outside university like EU grants and NWO.

6.2 Reflection on the institute

URU is together with Amsterdam one of the largest research institutes in the field of geosciences in the Netherlands. Research and researchers of the institute have a well known international reputation in the field.

It is appreciated by the committee that, despite the financial cut-backs, the institute managed to build strong research programmes and attract sufficient 2nd and 3rd stream funds.

The committee would like to encourage the institute to follow the strategy of differentiation in roles of the involved researchers and diversification of research and teaching tasks. The management of the institute has to put some effort in the internal communication in the institute to build linkages between the research programmes and within the two recently merged research programmes. There might be some overarching themes within the institute that can contribute to build linkages and improve communication:

- new ITCs and global forming; and
- globalization and spatial change.

The individual PhD projects that were presented to the committee were all very interesting and the committee met good talented serious PhD researchers.

The committee is of the opinion that is desirable for the PhD students to stimulate more communication within the scope of the institute and above that on the scale of NETHUR. The committee also got the impression that there was a gap in information on procedures and possibilities for the PhD students, which could be solved by producing a handbook for post-graduates.

Furthermore the committee would recommend that the PhD students might be encouraged to organize a regular institute-wide seminar to present and discuss the PhD projects across the groups. The interaction between PhD students can be improved. That will probably add to the quality of the PhD training.

6.3 Review of the research programme Urban Geography and Planning

The programme *Urban Geography and Planning* addresses various issues of urban regions on two related goals:

- To study the dynamic interactions between the spatiotemporal behaviour of individuals and their households and the spatial configuration of land uses such as housing, employment, facilities, and population categories and transport- and communication systems.
- To develop strategies, policies, methods, and tools that can support a highly dynamic and complex land-use/transportation-system configuration and land-use/transportation planning as related to the behaviours of people, firms, and institutions.

The central focus of the research programme is the configuration of activities by individuals and their households in time and space. Within the programme five themes are recognized:

- urban social divisions, housing and culture
- spatial mobility and urban development
- spatial and social aspects of health and healthcare
- geo-information for spatial planning support
- planning for the future of urban regions.

Given the diversity of these topics, it is inevitably difficult to develop an overall evaluation of the quality of the research across the group as a whole. Essentially, the committee saw the group's principal research thrust as being in the broad area of urban geography, where the quality and impact of its work are very strong. The traditional planning elements are a rather more minor element and one where the international impacts are much weaker.

The programme group had faced serious financial cut-backs. It has nevertheless been able to increase its productivity. The group obtained several grants and is rightly proud that it has been the coordinator of two EU projects. These externally funded projects helped the group to sharpen its ideas and get a better grip on the coherence in the group. The researchers want to contribute to the development of postmodern poststructuralist theory development and want to perform good empirical quantitative research. The group wants to combine the three lines of research that are now prominent in the programme to establish more insight and knowledge of the field.

Another ambition of the group is to publish more in the higher ranked journals.

Programme leader	Prof. M.Dijst
Research staff 2006	13.78
Assessments:	Quality: 4.0
	Quantity: 3.7
	Relevance: 4.0
	Viability: 3.8

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The output of this group has high quality on an internationally competitive level. The publications the committee has read were very good. The committee got the impression that the groups should aim at a higher level, that it punches somewhat below its weight. Some of the subjects of this group have high potential, for instance the health area and household issues. While the group has valuably published in a wide array of international high-level journals, the committee considered that it has the scope and talent to increase its visibility yet further in the international academic community, especially on topics in the household area.
Quantity	The publication rate of this group is very good, both on academic and on professional levels, The productivity of this group is nationally at the forefront. The group produced many dissertations during the assessment period.
Relevance	The issues addressed by this group are all socially very relevant and aimed at important current debates and policies. It was clear from the interview that members of the group were sensitive to these issues within urban geography and well placed to blend their academic and 'applied' research interests.
Viability	Recently some groups merged into this programme. That could be a reason why the group did not really act as coherently as it might. The committee would suggest that consideration should be paid to restructuring the group in order to find ways to stimulate each other. The geo-information for spatial planning support sub group could act as a service institution for the other sub themes. The viability of this group would increase when greater effort is put into teambuilding.

6.4 Review of the research programme Economic Geography

The programme *Economic Geography* addresses various topics in economic geography by focusing on three goals:

- to set out theoretically and conceptually the emerging framework of Evolutionary Economic Geography
- to develop empirical applications of Evolutionary Economic Geography, covering a wide range of research topics in economic geography;
- to develop strategies and policies to support policy makers and other stakeholders.

In this programme four analytical levels (spatial systems -macro, sector- meso, network – meso and firm- micro) are associated with the following four themes:

- locational behaviour of firms
- spatial evolution of industries
- spatial evolution of networks
- the evolution of urban and regional economies.

The group has an ambitious research programme and aims to make a large contribution in the international academic community.

Two of the senior researchers in the group have recently received a prestigious grant for innovative projects with a high impact.

Members of the group cooperate with other institutes within NETHUR on several projects and with other disciplines and departments of Utrecht University.

The group organized at the beginning of its existence two conferences to position themselves. The conferences connected two research areas that were not previously linked. The strategy to organize these conferences has worked to very good effect.

Programme director	Prof. R.Boschma
Research staff 2006	9.4
Assessments:	Quality: 4.6
	Quantity 4.4
	Relevance: 4.8
	Viability: 4.8

Explanation of the scores

Quality	This group performs at an excellent level. The group is internationally very well profiled. Publications are of European top quality.
Quantity	The productivity of the group is also of a high level, both on academic and on professional levels. It is visible and acknowledged on an international scale. This group produces very consistently a stream of good work.
Relevance	The issues addressed by this group are all socially very relevant, very innovative and aimed at actual debates and policies. Researchers of this group are visible in public debate. The group significantly influences international academic debates on a theoretical level and also on a policy level – with both very large and also increasing funding streams being generated from the EU.
Viability	This group is very coherent. All the researchers involved perform at a high level. The group has an enormous potential. The viability of the group depends in part on the way this group is able to keep their excellent researchers. It would be sensible to make some strategic human resources decisions to guarantee that.

6.5 Review of the research programme *Geography, Development and Representation*

The programme *Geography, Development and Representation* includes the broad and partly heterogeneous fields of development geography, regional geography, and cultural geography.

Established only in December 2006 as a merger of two clusters, created in 2003, it is the mission of the programme to contribute to:

- academic debates about local and regional development and about the representation of space and place;
- societal debates on development issues, policies, and interventions in the former Third and Second Worlds;
- high quality geographical representations of the world, at various levels of scale, in education and communication with non-specialist audiences.

The following four research domains are distinguished within the programme:

- local development: production structures and patterns of organization
- governance and policy issues
- changes in resource base conditions
- livelihood conditions

Recent changes in the composition of this programme and the aforementioned merger between the former clusters of International Development Studies and Cultural Geography/Representations of Space and Place and their respective research groups gave the opportunity to explore new themes and to organize common activities. These are, however, still in the development stage, not least because a new chair and programme leader has just been appointed.

Programme director	Prof. R.van der Vaart and dr P.van Lindert		
Research staff 2006	7.5		
Assessments:	Quality:	3.2	
	Quantity:	3.2	
	Relevance:	3.5	
	Viability:	3.0	

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The quality of the research output of this group is mainly at a national level. There is however not much coherence in the group, part of that can be traced to the recent merger. The group needs a publication strategy and a strong programme leader to establish coherence and improve the publication level. Nevertheless individual publications are of good quality and some reach the international forum.
Quantity	The academic publication output of this group is good, the professional publication output is very good.
Relevance	The research of this group is mainly focused at the professional field. The programme engages actively in research leading to publications for broader audiences. The relevance of the research is therefore obvious.
Viability	The committee was informed that a new chair was appointed within the group (IDS) with effect from the week of the assessment. Due to force majeure, the committee did not have the chance to meet the new professor and cannot evaluate the possible impact of this appointment. The Faculty has indicated that it trusts that this theme will have a viable future. With this appointment the group has now started to work full-speed on creating a new research programme with new themes such as climate change, migration and urbanisation. The committee thinks this group has a very viable future. As stated the group lacks at the moment of assessment

coherence and needs a publication strategy. There is some unevenness in this group. The committee would recommend using the new appointment as a start to build a new programme. Some of the studied subjects have good potential. In this respect new cultural geography, historical geography and livelihoods and governance can be mentioned.

6.6 Review of the research programme *History of Cartography*

The research programme *History of Cartography* focuses on analytical carto-bibliography: the analysis and reconstruction of Dutch cartography from the early modern age to the end of the 20th century. The research group is the only European academic research group specialized in the history of cartography. The strategic objectives of the research group can be translated into three research themes:

- reconstruction of geo-information products;
- accessibility of geo-information products;
- reconstruction and analysis of geo-information flows, production and use.

This relatively small group studies maps as an art, and the processes, the production and the producers of cartographic products. There are some links with the historical geography researchers within URU which is coming into effect through two PhD projects on estate maps.

The group works with a relatively large group of volunteers, who contribute to the research output.

Programme director	Dr P.van der Krogt
Research staff 2006	2.5
Assessments:	Quality: 5.0
	Quantity: 4.0
	Relevance: 4.5
	Viability: 3.2

Explanation of the scores

Quality	The output of this group is of excellent quality and unique. The group is 2 nd in the world and leading in Europe. It is the only historical cartography group in the Netherlands.
Quantity	The productivity of the group is very good, not least in light of the fact that many of the publications are substantial books.
Relevance	The uniqueness of this group and the visibility of its output to a large public makes the relevance of this research very high.
Viability	The viability of this group is somewhat problematic. It is a 'strange duck in the pond', not comparable with the other research groups in the institute. The productivity of the group relies in large part on the dedication of volunteers, which makes the research management and the steering of the process very complex. Inevitably, the committee has some questions about the position of this research unit in URU. The group did not seem to have any funding strategy. The viability of the group depends on the numbers of scholars it can interest for the specific research area. It takes a strategy aimed at students who are starting with their geography study to establish a pool of potential successors for the actual researchers. The committee would endorse the University's own view that this is a 'research pearl' which adds considerably to the lustre of Utrecht and of Dutch scholarship more broadly. Given the quality of its work, the cartographic holdings in map libraries across the Netherlands, and the undoubted interest in historic cartography, it would be a significant national and international loss were the group not to have a perceived future. The committee would make two suggestions. First, in order to attract greater interest from students who

could provide the next cohort of researchers, the group should consider becoming involved in teaching in bachelor degree programmes. This could be in the form of the inclusion of a history of cartography course in the first year course: 'social and cultural perspectives on space and distance'. Second, there may be merit in developing stronger links with the nascent development of historical geography within Utrecht. Seen through the eyes of scholars such as the late J.B.Harley or D.Woodward, the study of cartography can be used as a powerful tool to understand the ways in which contemporary societies interpreted their social and physical environments. Exploring such links with historical geography may again be a way of capitalizing on the enormous potential of the cartographic legacy in Utrecht and of complementing its impressive output of historical cartography.

7 Institute for Management Research Radboud University Nijmegen

The programme Governance and Places is part of the Institute for Management Research of the Faculty of Management Sciences Radboud university Nijmegen. This research programme is the only programme of this institute that was assessed during this evaluation. The institute itself is not assessed by this committee.

7.1 Review of the research programme Governance and Places

The programme *Governance and Places* (GaP) explores and evaluates the social and environmental qualities of places, from local to global, with particular interest in questions of spatial formation and governance. Specific research topics include: borders, migration, urban and regional development, transport and spatial development, water management, environmental policy and governance, land policy and location development, urban and regional restructuring, identities and borders, land policy, and European spatial planning. A key aspect of the programme's strength and viability is the integration of knowledge, perspectives and methods from four disciplines: human geography, spatial planning, environmental studies and public administration. GaP unites researchers from various backgrounds and disciplines who share an interest in the qualities of places, and their governance. It brings together expertise in the fields of human geography, spatial planning, environmental sciences and public administration to explore and explain a range of spatial phenomena and to deliver (policy) recommendations.

The programme is part of the Faculty of Management. Other departments of this Faculty are economy, business administration, political sciences and public administration. The faculty had some very severe financial cut backs, which also effected GaP. The strategy of the Faculty to stimulate research was aimed at the following steps:

- developing formal rules for budgeting the programmes and departments
- stimulating research funding from 2nd and 3rd stream
- investing in a new generation of researchers to replace the (early) retired generation
- attracting more foreign staff members; the aim is 25% in 2012.
- recruiting young talent in an early stage of the career.

In recent years this strategy has resulted in the appointment of six professors on a personal basis. The faculty aims to grow in mass and focus.

GaP had made a wise choice to be selective in investment decisions: for example, not to invest in Geo-information Systems since it is not seen as a core subject for GaP; whereas strengthening investment in governance and decision making was seen as essential to bolster the core of GaP. The programme group has created a balance in expertise in content and process management and took up new fields like water management and infrastructure.

Programme director	Prof. R.van der Heijden
Research coordinator	Dr A. Lagendijk
Research staff 2006	27.74
Assessments:	Quality: 3.7
	Quantity: 4.4
	Relevance: 3.4
	Viability: 3.6

Explanation of the scores

Quality	Within NETHUR this group is the largest programme group. The group aims at eight research themes. The quality of the output of the group is therefore variable and recently improving. Some of these themes are very promising and innovative and have a high international profile. The majority of the journals in which this group publishes is however not very highly ranked. The committee recommends a publication strategy to improve the quality.
Quantity	The productivity of the group is very high.
Relevance	The research subjects studied are all relevant to society and the public debate. The committee appreciates the strategy of the programme group to pick up new emerging societal themes like bordering and water management. GaP's research has been receiving considerable interest and support in society, as manifested through a steep growth in grants and contract research (from 20% in 2000 to 50% in 2007). The research of this group is very promising but they still have to prove they have a significant impact on the international and national debates, as the committee trust they will be doing in due time.
Viability	<p>The research group appeared, despite its size, as a very coherent group. The committee sees this coherence as one of the strengths of this programme group. The diversity of the studied subjects and the heterogeneity in disciplinary background could however also lead to some problems. The programme could benefit more from participating in NETHUR and co-operating with other researchers in this school. Such national and international research networking would seem important both as a way of helping to counteract some of the financial difficulties faced within the Faculty and of creating more visibility to the work done within Nijmegen. The PhD students are all enthusiastic and focused on their own research projects but could also benefit more from the courses and exchange possibilities NETHUR offers.</p> <p>The committee would recommend the programme group to focus more on its strengths in some of the more promising research subjects. For example, the committee was very impressed by the achievements of the sub-group on bordering. Some of the wider intellectual issues raised by its work could provide powerful themes around which a number of the research interests in the overall group could profitably be developed.</p> <p>The leadership in this programme seems to be strong and has adjusted impressively to what is a very difficult situation. The group has a clear strategy. It acts as a team both in terms of a management and theoretical sense. It includes some very promising young researchers; and in this respect it is important that GaP develops a conscious strategy to identify and retain individual researchers who are likely to make substantial contributions in future.</p> <p>The strategy of assigning two staff members as acquisition managers is evaluated very positively by the committee.</p>

APPENDIX A:

Protocol Urban and Regional Research

Evaluation protocol 2007 for the review of the Dutch Field of Urban and Regional Research

Period under review 2000-2006

1. Introduction

This evaluation protocol is an elaboration of the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) 2003 - 2009 for public research organisations in The Netherlands. The SEP stipulates the requirements for research assessments of institutes of the Dutch universities and of the NWO and KNAW as agreed by the governing boards of the association of universities VSNU and of the NWO and KNAW. For items not covered in this protocol the provisions of the SEP apply.

The governing boards of Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA), University of Groningen (RUG) and Utrecht University (UU) and the dean of the Nijmegen School of Management² are responsible for the present evaluation. They appoint the chair and members of the committee. They determine the protocol for the evaluation. They are responsible for the publication of the reports of the committee and for the conclusions to be drawn from these reports.

2. Units to be assessed

This research assessment concerns:

1. Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies (AMIDSt) of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, UvA³
2. Institute for Management Research (IMR) of the Nijmegen School of Management, RU
3. OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies (OTB), TU Delft⁴
4. Urban and Regional Research Centre Utrecht (URU) of the Faculty of Geosciences, UU
5. Urban and Regional Studies Institute (URSI) of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, RUG

The research programmes under review are listed in Appendix 1.

3. External Evaluation Committee: profile and expertise

The assessment will be performed by an independent international external evaluation committee.

The review committee consists of a maximum of seven members including the chair. Committee members are experts in one or several of the programmes of the research institutes under review. Some of them have a background in interdisciplinary research. The members of the committee are well-established scientists with an international reputation.

They are fully independent of the research institutes under review.

2 In Nijmegen the evaluation will take place at a lower managerial level. The dean has the final responsibility and the evaluation refers to a programme and not an institute. The text of this protocol should be read accordingly (substituting programme for institute)

3 AMIDSt was founded in 2004 by joining AME (Amsterdam research centre for the Metropolitan Environment) and AGIDS (Amsterdam research institute for Global Issues and Development Studies). De period under review therefore covers a period before AMIDSt was founded (2000-2003) and after AMIDSt was founded (2004-2006).

4 The period under review for OTB is 2003-2006; the years 2000-2002 were reviewed earlier. The report of this review is included in the background documentation.

Together, their expertise covers the following fields: Urban & Regional Geography, Economic Geography, Housing, Cultural Geography, Political Geography, Urban & Regional Planning/Governance, Demography, International Development Studies, Geo-Information.

Members of the committee have experience with the organisation and management of research at the university level; they are familiar with international scientific cooperation, some of them more specifically with large scale cooperation. At least one of the members has an adequate insight in the (organisation of) research in The Netherlands.

4. Assignment

The evaluation committee is asked to assess against international scientific standards the research institutes mentioned under section 2 and their research programmes specified in appendix 1 in the period 2000 up to and including 2006.

In addition the evaluation committee is asked to reflect upon the various contributions of each institute under review to the discipline and upon the research portfolio they represent for the Netherlands within their field.

Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria for the institutes as a whole and those for the research programmes are similar, but differ in scope and depth. The institute assessment puts emphasis on strategy and organisational aspects, whereas the programme assessments focus on the results and quality of the scientific research and on the future.

The main criteria to be used in the evaluation are:

- Quality (international recognition and innovative potential)
- Productivity (scientific output)
- Relevance (scientific and social impact)
- Vitality and feasibility (flexibility, management and leadership)

The main criteria should always be reviewed in relation to the mission of the institute or group.

The evaluation committee presents its judgement on the criteria according to a five-point scale: excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory. An extended description of this scale is given in appendix 2 of the SEP 2003-2009.

Procedure

The evaluation committee will have a 4-5 day visit, starting in Groningen, then Amsterdam, Delft, Utrecht, and finally Nijmegen. The programme for the visit will be agreed between the chair and the directors of the institutes. The evaluation committee receives all relevant material (Standard Evaluation Protocol 2003-2009, this evaluation protocol, self-evaluation documents according to appendix 4⁵, additional input and background documents as specified in appendix 3 and the visiting programme) at least four weeks in advance of their site visit.

The chairman may ask, possibly after consulting the other committee members, for additional information from the institutes or the boards.

The committee will meet in a closed session before the site visit after being formally installed by a representative of the Board of the University of Groningen (RUG). In that closed session, the committee decides on their working procedure for the visit and for writing the draft report.

During the visit, the committee meets with:

- The director of the institute in question;
- The dean of the faculty (if applicable);
- The programme leaders of the institute;

⁵ Appendices are not included in this appendix to the report.

- Any (group of) person(s) of the institute asking to be heard by the committee.

Before each meeting the committee will indicate with whom and about what the interview will be conducted.

At the end of the visit the committee will meet with the university/faculty board to present a first, oral, report.

After the visit the committee will draw up a report. In order to avoid any factual errors or mistakes, the chair asks the director of the institute to comment on the draft evaluation report.

After having received these comments, the committee concludes its evaluation by formulating the evaluation report and if applicable a management letter and by presenting it to the university board.

The institute's management is asked by the university board to reply to the issues raised by the evaluation committee in its report. This reply is added to the report as an appendix and forms an integral part of the final evaluation report.

The university board will publish the report. It will discuss the report and if applicable the management letter with the dean of the Faculty and the director of the institute and the consequences to be drawn from them.

Together, the self-evaluation document, the final evaluation report and the conclusions made by the board form the results of the external evaluation.

Information

Each institute provides a self-evaluation document approved by the university board according to the format specified in appendix 4⁶.

Appendix 3 lists the additional input and background documents that will be provided to the committee.

Evaluation Report

The committee is asked to formulate its assessment in a report, which is to be made public by the boards of the universities mentioned under section 1, specifying:

1. A review of the each *institute as a whole*, containing:
 - 1.1. A reflection on the leadership, strategy and policy of each institute
 - 1.2. An assessment of the quality of the resources, funding policies and facilities
 - 1.3. An assessment of the academic reputation of each institute
 - 1.4. An assessment of the societal relevance of each institute
 - 1.5. A reflection on the strengths and weaknesses each institute has formulated in the self assessment

2. A review of *each research programme* as listed in Appendix 1, containing:
 - 2.1. A quantified assessment of the quality, productivity, relevance and prospects of the research programme (according to a five-point scale specified in appendix 2 of the SEP)
 - 2.2. A justification for this quantified assessment, containing:
 - 2.2.1. A reflection on the leadership, strategy and policy of/for the research programme
 - 2.2.2. An assessment of the quality of the research staff, (human) resources, funding policies and facilities
 - 2.2.3. An assessment of the quality and quantity of the publications and of the publication strategies
 - 2.2.4. An assessment of the academic reputation of the group/programme
 - 2.2.5. An assessment of the relevance of the programme from an academic perspective and from a broader social perspective
 - 2.2.6. An assessment of the future perspectives of the programme.

⁶ See footnote 4

In preparing the report the following questions are to be taken into consideration:

For past performance:

1. What are the quality and relevance of each institute?
2. What is the quality of the leadership, management, strategy and research programmes of each institute, its (human) resources, organisation and infrastructure and how can they be improved?
3. To what extent has the institute/research programme achieved its mission?

For future plans:

1. Is the overall mission of each institute/research programme well chosen and phrased in view of the actual developments in the relevant research field(s)?
2. What are the scientific qualities and the relevance of the institutes' research plans and to what extent are these plans in line with the overall missions of the institutes, i.e. is there sufficient coherence in the research portfolio of each institute?
3. What is the quality of the leadership, management and strategy of each institute, its (human) resources, organisation and infrastructure and how can they be improved?
4. Which of these aspects has room for improvement and how could that be accomplished?

The evaluation committee may be asked to answer additional questions from the board of the research organisation. These may refer to specific tasks of the institute not directly related to its research, specific situations such as major changes in the organisation or mission of the institute, or specific demands of stakeholders who help fund the institute in a substantial way.

Such additional questions by the boards to the evaluation committee are listed in appendix 2 by university.

The objective of accountability can only be met by producing a transparent and informative public report of the evaluation's outcomes. On the other hand, to meet the objective of improvement and advice to the research management and the board of the institute, the evaluation committee should feel free to discuss the future of the research and of the institute. For this second objective, the evaluation committee can organise discussions with the institute's scientific leaders during their site visit and draw up a management letter to the board. Matters of personnel policy and sensitive decisions are generally treated in the confidential management letter to the board and do not form part of the public report.

APPENDIX B:

The Review Committee

Louis Albrechts is Professor of Urban and Regional Planning and former Head of Department of Architecture, Urban design and Regional Planning at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. His research interests are strategic planning, planning methodologies and public involvement in planning.

Adrian Bailey is Head of School at the School of Geography at the University of Leeds. His research interests include transnational societies and belonging, family migration and well-being, health and place, and geographic pedagogy.

David Clapham is professor of Housing at the University of Cardiff and convenor of the Housing Research Group. His research interests can be found in the field of application of social theory to housing and housing policy.

Philip McCann is professor of Economics at the University of Waikato. His research interests are urban and regional economics, transportation economics and international business economics.

Eckart Ehlers is professor emeritus in Geography of the University of Bonn. He is presently senior fellow at the Centre for Development Research (ZEF). His research interests are urban and rural development and interactions nature-society.

Paul Longley is professor of Geographic Information Science and deputy director of UCL's Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis. His research is focused around the principles and techniques of geographic information science (GISc).

Brian Robson is professor emeritus in Geography at the University of Manchester and Director of the Centre for Urban Policy Studies (CUPS). His research interests are Urban regeneration, Urban governance, Social exclusion and Mental Health, North European Trade Axis.

APPENDIX C:

Assessment criteria and rating

The committee acted upon the description of the protocol, concerning the interpretation of the four main assessment criteria.

Quality is to be seen as a measure of excellence and excitement. It refers to the eminence of a group's research activities, its abilities to perform at the highest level and its achievements in the international scientific community. It rests on the proficiency and rigour of research concepts and conduct; it shows in the success of the group at the forefront of scientific development. As a rule, experts in the field – the peers – judge this. They rely on their own knowledge and expertise, on discussions with the group leaders and other members, and on various kinds of systematic information. When an institute provides high quality state of the art facilities to the research community this can be considered as a measure of excellence.

Quantity refers to the total output of the group; that is, the variegated ways in which results of research and knowledge development are publicised. Usually, quantitative indicators measure this. In most cases this will be bibliometrics, which are indicators concerned with publications and citations of publications. The output needs to be reviewed in relation to the input in terms of human resources.

Relevance is a criterion that covers both the scientific and the technical and socio-economic impact of the work. Here in particular research choices are assessed in relation to developments in the international scientific community or, in the case of technical and socio-economic impact, in relation to important developments or questions in society at large.

Viability, includes vitality and feasibility, and refers to the internal and external dynamics of the group in relation to the choices made and the success rate of projects. On the one hand, this criterion measures the flexibility of a group, which appears in its ability to close research lines that have no future and to initiate new venture projects. On the other hand, it measures the capacity of the management to run projects in a professional way. Assessment of policy decisions is at stake, as well as assessment of project management, including cost-benefit analysis.

The review committee presents its assessment on quality, quantity, relevance and viability according to a five-point scale, specified in the SEP:

Excellent = 5

Work that is at the forefront internationally, and which most likely will have an important and substantial impact in the field. Institute is considered an international leader.

Very good = 4

Work that is internationally competitive and is expected to make a significant contribution; nationally speaking at the forefront in the field. Institute is considered international player, national leader.

Good = 3

Work that competitive at the national level and will probably make a valuable contribution in the international field. Institute is considered internationally visible and a national player.

Satisfactory = 2

Work that is solid but not exciting, will add to our understanding and is in principle worthy of support. It is considered of less priority than work in the above categories. Institute is nationally visible.

Unsatisfactory = 1

Work that is neither solid nor exciting, flawed in the scientific and or technical approach, repetitions of other work, etc. Work not worthy of pursuing.

Date 29 January 2008
Our reference 08012905A.SOV
Telephone/fax +31 (0)15 27 81908/+31 (0)15 27 84422
E-mail p.j.boelhouwer@tudelft.nl
Subject programme Geo-information and Land Development



Delft University of Technology

TUD Executive Board
P.O. Box 5
2600 AA Delft

Visiting address
Jaffalaan 9
2628 BX Delft
Postal address
P.O. Box 5030
2600 GA Delft
The Netherlands

www.otb.tudelft.nl

Dear Executive Board,

On behalf of the OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies I thank the Review Committee for accepting the responsibility to carry out the assessment of Urban and Regional Research in the Netherlands. The committee performed extensive work by reading the extensive self-evaluation documents, by making five site visits in five days, and by drawing up the evaluation report.

The institute regrets that the Review Committee has only assessed six of the seven research programmes of OTB. The committee decided not to assess the programme Geo-information and Land Development. This programme will now be part of the assessment of the research of the Faculty of Technology, Policy and Management which is planned to take place in two years time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Boelhouwer", written over a large, sweeping flourish.

Prof. dr. P.J. Boelhouwer
Scientific director of OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies



Heidelberglaan 2, Utrecht

PO Box 80115, 3508 TC Utrecht

The Board of Nethur
Faculty of Geosciences
Utrecht University
Heidelberglaan 2
3584 CS Utrecht

Bestuur

Datum
June 5th, 2008
Onderwerp
Comments on Assessment Report

Fax (direct)
(030) 254 06 04
Telefoon (direct)
(030) 253 20 44
E-Mail
bestuur@geo.uu.nl
Blad
Blad 1 van 1

Dear members of the Board,

Herewith the Faculty of Geosciences in Utrecht would like to present its response to the recent assessment report. The official translated statement can be found in the attached document.

Yours Sincerely,

Prof.dr. G.J. van der Zwaan
Dean of the Faculty of Geosciences
Utrecht University



Response of Utrecht University – Faculty of Geosciences on the URU assessment.

The board of the Faculty of Geosciences of Utrecht University shares the views expressed in the report on the Assessment of Urban and Regional Research in the Netherlands, 2000-2006 that was finalised by the end of 2007. In response to the review of the Urban and Regional research centre Utrecht (URU) a number of actions has been taken that will be briefly described below.

The review committee sees the URU as one of the largest and most prolific institutes in the Netherlands with an international reputation. Despite substantial financial cut-backs, leading to early retirement of some very experienced and prominent researchers, the institute has managed to continue to build strong research programmes that have successfully competed in the 2nd and 3rd money-stream.

According to the committee the programmes on Economic Geography and Historical Cartography are excellent and internationally leading in their field. The Faculty Board concurs with this evaluation and will not change these winning teams but search for means to continue investment into these groups.

The programme on Urban Geography and Planning has been evaluated as very good and internationally competitive. A weakness of the programme is the lack of coherence between the research on urban geography, where quality and international impact are very strong and the research on urban planning that is more nationally oriented by nature. The faculty is of the opinion that the focus of the programme can be improved and has invited the group to come up with more coherent research priorities, building on the strengths of the prominent international position of the work in urban geography.

The relatively small programme in Geography, Development, and Representation was evaluated as good and competitive at the national level. The major criticism of the committee is the unbalance between the very good output of professional publications and the smaller output in the international forum. This adds to the relevance of the research but not to the academic standing. The Faculty and the Department of Human Geography and Planning are preparing some radical changes in the organisation of this programme along the lines suggested by the committee.

The Faculty greatly appreciates the effort and expert judgment by the committee and wishes to express her gratitude to its chair prof Robson and the individual members that were willing to travel from all over the world for this time-consuming advice to further improve research in Human Geography in the Netherlands.