



Rural Research and Strategy Partnership

US
University of Sussex

Invitation to a Workshop on Rural Scenario Development: 13th November 2008

The Rural Research and Strategy Partnership (RRSP) and the University of Sussex would like to invite you to a free, one-day workshop on **Rural Scenario Development** at the Freeman Centre, Sussex University, Falmer, Brighton, East Sussex, on **13th November 2008**, 11:00 – 17:00.

Who is the RRSP?

The Rural Research and Strategy Partnership is a new collaborative partnership between the Universities of Sussex, Surrey, Reading, Forest Research and the University for the Creative Arts. This collaboration of top-rated research establishments aims to tackle key rural problems by generating multi-disciplinary research and promoting the dialogue between academics, key rural organisations, rural businesses and policy-makers in the South East Region. The Partnership is initially supported by the South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA).

As part of a three-year programme, the Partnership will be running a number of research workshops on issues relating to rural sustainability. These workshops will act as a catalyst for developing new collaborations between the partner institutions, stakeholders and rural businesses and are specifically aimed at identifying new research and knowledge exchange opportunities.

Why Rural Scenario Development?

Rural environments and communities are undergoing continuous changes and subsequently are facing new challenges and opportunities. In the 2007 annual report, the Rural Advocate, Stewart Burgess, identified factors such as demographic change, the change in nature of the rural workforce, changing landscapes and climate change as the most significant current impacts for the rural communities. We have an understanding of the current rural baseline, but how will rural environments and communities develop in the future? What factors are likely to influence its development and what actions will be required to adapt to these potential changes?

The RRSP/University of Sussex workshop on Rural Scenario Development seeks to explore the critical issues that are likely influence the future of rural areas in the South East of England.

Aim and Structure of Workshop

During the workshop, rural stakeholders and researchers from a variety of different disciplines will jointly explore and evaluate the key underlying themes and factors that could influence future rural development. Led by Dr Sigrid Stagl from the Science and Technology Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University of Sussex, the workshop participants will explore the following:

(1) Critical issues that will influence the future of rural areas in SE England

- Identify the issues;
- Rate the issues on an 'uncertainty/impact grid'.

(2) Key underlying themes

- Identify 'pivotal uncertainties';
- Cluster the 'pivotal uncertainties' to identify and name underlying themes;
- Explore alternative outcomes of the uncertainties.

(3) Scenario development

- Use themes to form four distinct sketches for scenarios;
- Develop time lines to show the flow of unfolding events;

(4) Presentations of the four scenarios.

Who should attend this workshop and what will you gain?

This workshop will be of interest to all stakeholders and researchers with an interest in Rural Sustainability. Through intensive deliberations between participants, the workshop will foster the processes of 'engagement' and 'social learning', thereby leading to a broader-based and more subtle understanding of strategic options for rural systems in the South East.

We very much hope that you will be able to attend. The workshop is **free** of charge, but you do need to register by contacting the RRSP co-ordinator, Anja Ueberjahn-Tritta by **Friday, 31st October 2008** via email anja.ueberjahn-tritta@forestry.gsi.gov.uk, or at the

Rural Research and Strategy Partnership Secretariat
Alice Holt Lodge, Wrecclesham
Farnham, Surrey, GU10 4LH
01420 526 194

Please feel free to forward this invitation to someone who would be specifically interested in attending.