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# Agrekon

VOL. 8 No. 2

APRIL, 1969

Editorial Committee: A.J. du Plessis (chairman),  
Dr. A.P. Scholtz, H.J. van Rensburg and  
O.E. Burger  
Editor: Dr. A.J. Beyleveld  
Technical editing: Q. Momberg

## REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Articles in the field of agricultural economics, suitable for publication in the journal, will be welcomed.

Articles should have a maximum length of 10 folio pages (including tables, graphs, etc.), typed in double spacing. Contributions, in the language preferred by the writer, should be submitted in triplicate to the Editor, c/o Department of Agricultural Economics and Marketing, Pretoria, and should reach him at least one month prior to date of publication.

The Journal is obtainable from the distributors: "AGREKON", Private Bag 144, Pretoria.

The price is 25 cents per copy or R1 per annum, post free.

The dates of publication are January, April, July and October.

"AGREKON" is also published in Afrikaans.

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# The Organisational Structure for the planning of National and Sub-National Development

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by

C.J. VILJOEN

Department of Urban and Regional Planning,  
University of Pretoria

National development is merely the sum-total of development which takes place in all regions of a country. Although this tenet is self-evident, it was only realised in recent years that development of the country could be stimulated by viewing the country as a group of regions, each of which has its individual features, possibilities and problems. In this manner the human, financial and technological resources of a country can be used to stimulate development in a particular region or regions with the knowledge that progress in this region will in turn contribute to national progress. During recent years some western countries have divided the national area into development regions and appointed boards to assist the central government in the planning and development of the respective regions. The purpose of this paper is to establish what the organisational setup in the Republic should be to secure the greatest advantages from our efforts in further development.

According to some authorities the spatial structure of economic activities is of cardinal importance in a country which is in a transitional stage of economic development. In primitive undeveloped countries where industries have not been established, the economic as well as the physical space is largely undifferentiated and without a distinctive structure, that is there are no points of concentration of economic activities, and such activities as exist appear individually or in small groups which are distributed fairly evenly over the country. In those countries, sub-national planning does not yet merit consideration because there the problems are country-wide and can only be solved on a national basis. At the opposite end of the scale of development, is the highly developed country where the total economic and physical space is so well integrated that it constitutes a combined whole which can with difficulty be divided into compartments. It is for this reason that some of these countries devote attention to so-called spatial planning instead of regional planning and that the spatial implications of national policy replace the regional policy in a developing country.

In the early stages of industrialization economic activities tend to be concentrated mainly in a few localities, and islands of development originate - the core periphery conception. These focal points usually constitute metropolitan areas

or large cities which grow rapidly and where a fairly high standard of living is maintained while the rest of the country stands still or may even decline. Countries in this stage of development have no integrated economic landscape which constitutes a firm unit and one of the main objectives of national development is to create a more integrated system.

A prerequisite for spatial planning, as well as for any other form of planning, is the clear formulation of objectives. At the national level there should be over-riding country-wide objectives, including a national policy for regional development which will be specially directed to view all the development regions in a country as interdependent area units. The objectives of regional and sub-national development must be formulated to take into account the level of economic development of the country. The regional problem is subordinate to the national problem and the objectives of regional development must thus fit in with the general national objectives. An effective regional development policy must handle all the development regions in a country as a single system, in other words, the regions must not be viewed as a series of independent compartments.

The overall development objective (on a national level) is to attain and to maintain a high rate of economic growth and the general regional objective is consequently the establishment of an economic spatial structure which will contribute most to the economic progress of the country. Within the framework of the national regional policy, the development policy of the respective development regions must be formulated separately and jointly. In South Africa which is characterised by a few dominating cores and certain stagnant regions, the elimination of the great differences between the two kinds of regions will be an additional objective. To achieve this objective attention will have to be devoted to the creation of a hierarchy of central places which will best articulate the economic landscape of the country. This objective can only be reached when a complete growth model, capable of simulating the total development of a country becomes available and which can indicate in advance possible economic bottlenecks. Another

requirement is to collect information continuously and feed this back to the model in order that development trends can constantly be checked. This important function can clearly only be undertaken by a government department.

An absolute prerequisite for national planning is that physical and economic or development planning must be under the same roof. The physical planner must always investigate the physical consequences of economic policy and on the other hand he must advise the economists regarding a desirable or ideal physical structure. At the national level the planning process consists on the one hand of policy formulation and on the other of co-ordinating and programming. Policy formulation and programming are mainly of an economic nature and the overall directive element of planning must thus to a large extent originate with the economists. The function of co-ordination on the other hand is mainly inter-disciplinary in character and belongs preferably in a department which disposes of professional persons in various fields. For development planning a government department with the power to co-ordinate, is an essential requirement. That department must have ample trained personnel to keep in touch with development, to investigate trends and to make projections. Since the private sector is largely responsible for the implementation of development projects, there should at the national level be close liaison with that sector. The Resources and Planning Advisory Council fulfills an important role in that respect as well as in the field of co-ordination, but its function of programming will still have to be developed.

At the sub-national level the planning organization will be influenced by the method by which regions are defined. There are existing administrative boundaries which will have to be respected, e.g. boundaries of magisterial districts, since these have for many years been the basic units for census data and information is available on that basis. In many instances the districts are comparatively small and a number can be grouped together for the purpose of planning. The provinces are the other group of administrative units and the question arises to what extent their boundaries should be respected in planning. It is obvious that provincial boundaries which were established by historical chance, will not necessarily co-incide with planning boundaries. But should the boundaries of planning and development regions necessarily be the same? This is one major question. A development region is defined in terms of certain development criteria, *inter alia* the level of material welfare of the inhabitants, the degree of concentration of economic activities, the functional classification of towns in the area, etc. In accordance with this classification, similar regions have corresponding characteristics of development and retardation. A development region is thus mainly determined to identify problems and characteristics, that is, it is an instrument which is used for analytical purposes. The development region is seldom an identifiable geo-

graphical area with perceptible physical boundaries. Even where boundaries can be established with reasonable certainty, they will change over time, because of economic progress or shifts in the patterns of location. Four or five development regions<sup>1)</sup> can be identified, namely:

1. Core or metropolitan regions which are characterised by the great concentration of economic activities and which defined by the commuting distance of workers in the region.
2. Frontier regions which are characterised by the development of new resources and which offer at that stage possibilities of further development.
3. Advancing transitional regions which usually contain developed agricultural areas and where the inhabitants maintain a fairly high standard of living.
4. Declining transitional regions where the standard of living of the inhabitants is low and the income per head shows a gradual and relative deterioration.
5. Special problem regions which offer certain possibilities for development, e.g. for recreation, or which face a specific problem which inhibits development.

All these regions have their peculiar development problems. In core regions the emphasis is on traffic and transport problems, housing shortages, the lack of co-ordination between neighbouring local authorities and other problems which are more technical and physical than economic. In advancing transitional regions the emphasis is on agricultural problems, the maintenance and improvement of the infrastructure of the region as well as limited industrial development. In declining transitional regions primitive agricultural practices largely hinder development and considerable attention is devoted to the improvement of farming methods. In the resource frontier regions the first requirement is the establishment of an effective infrastructure on which the development of the area can be based. The special problem region is in accordance with the definition an area where a particular problem exists but which offers possibilities for further development.

Because of the divergent problems encountered in the respective kinds of regions, different methods will have to be followed to overcome the problems and to establish plans for the future. The development plans for the respective regions will also not necessarily be similar. For transitional regions, advancing as well as declining, a properly formulated development policy will be sufficient to guide the development of such a region into a preconceived direction. The policy will *inter alia* cover the following aspects: farming practices, education and hospital services, transport and roads, water conservation and irrigation, housing etc. At present the responsibility for some of these matters rests

1) Friedmann, J., Regional Development Policy, M.I.T. Press, Boston, 1966.

with the central government while others belong to the provincial authorities. Probably the greatest need for planning in this region is the co-ordination of development by public authorities, as well as its programming to reap the greatest benefit from the investment. In addition, information must be collected regularly and analysed to determine the development trends, and if necessary to adapt or change the development policy. The co-ordinating function can best be undertaken by a committee on which all the authorities involved and private interests are represented. It should be a committee of the Resources and Planning Advisory Council because it is the function of that Council to keep a watchful eye over all the regions of the country. Although it will fall under that Council, there is no reason why it should not perform certain functions for the provincial administrations. In fact, it will not be able to co-ordinate development unless that is done. Since these committees will have no technical staff, the Department of Planning should accept that responsibility. Although most of the Bantu Homelands are located in these regions, a more dynamic and purposive organizational set-up will be necessary to plan for their development. This will be dealt with later.

In the regions on the threshold of further development, the so-called resource frontier regions, more positive action will have to be taken to ensure that development takes place systematically. A board or a corporation with powers to plan and to implement certain projects will be more suitable for this purpose than a committee with advisory powers. The funds which the various state and provincial departments devote individually for the establishment of regional and municipal services, can be used to finance such a development board or corporation. This will ensure that the region is planned as a whole and that development will take place on a co-ordinated and programmed basis. The development corporation will appoint its own professional staff while the development board will have personnel seconded by the Department of Planning.

The same procedure should be followed in the planning of special problem regions, since it is essential that those regions should receive continuous attention until such time as the guide lines for further development have been established with certainty. The development plans of those regions will have to fit into the greater whole but this can be ensured because the funds for development will come mainly from the central and provincial governments and can be granted conditional on the necessary co-operation. The development corporation will disappear after its task is completed, and will be replaced by a Regional Committee of the Resources Advisory Council.

Although in terms of development criteria, the Bantu Homelands are mostly located in the

declining transitional regions, they can, viewed politically, be described as special problem areas and be treated in a similar manner. It is therefore proposed that a statutory development board or corporation which will be directly responsible to the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, or to a cabinet committee under the chairmanship of that Minister, should be established for each of the Bantu Homelands. Each development body will have to prepare immediately a development plan for its entire area or for parts thereof. The plan will also have to indicate how the proposed development is to be achieved. After the plan for a particular region has been approved the necessary funds will have to be provided to carry out the first phase of the plan. The Minister of Bantu Administration and Development will be kept fully informed. With the best will in the world a single state department, which is responsible for the whole country, and which is hindered by a shortage of staff, cannot give the necessary attention to the development of the Homelands. In relation to the entire planning set-up in the Republic, I consider this as the highest priority.

For the planning of metropolitan regions a statutory metropolitan board is proposed. This board which will consist of members appointed by the Administrator concerned and representatives of the local authorities in the region, will be responsible mainly for overall planning, the planning and provision of transport facilities, essential services which are as yet not provided on a regional basis, the provision of recreation grounds, etc. The proposed metropolitan authority will have to obtain some of its powers from the respective local authorities and others from the provincial administration. Although it will be closely associated with the provincial administration and the respective local authorities, it must have its own administrative and technical staff. It will have to be financed by grants from the local authorities in the metropolitan area, the provincial administration and the central government. It is essential that the central government should make a larger financial contribution for the planning and execution of planning proposals, including traffic and transport planning in metropolitan areas.

There is nothing revolutionary in these proposals because the premise is that the existing systems must be extended and ultimately adjusted depending upon the problems which might be encountered. At the national level the Department of Planning along with the Resources and Planning Advisory Council, is adequate for our purpose. As far as the regions are concerned, it is only in respect of problem and rapidly developing regions that a more effective system must be found, and this relates in particular to the development of the Bantu regions. Our metropolitan areas are still young and comparatively small and we can with advantage test the metropolitan systems which function in a few other parts of the world.