



Commonwealth Association of Planners

**Professional accreditation of planning programmes in the
Commonwealth**

A report to the Commonwealth Foundation
March 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The planning profession historically has been smaller in numbers and less established than the architects, engineers and surveyors amongst the built environment professions. This short study has looked at what access there is for professional accreditation for planners in the Commonwealth.

A very basic questionnaire was constructed so that it could easily and quickly be answered. It was distributed by email to Secretaries of CAP member institutes. Responses were received from 18 institutes. Between them these covered institutes in 5 continents, and a mix of large institutes such as those in UK and Canada and small island institutes (e.g. Malta and Mauritius). In addition, material was extracted from the website of the Indian Town Planning Institute (ITPI), and from the Ghana Institute of Planners. There are many Commonwealth countries without a planning institute or a planning school.

Planning programmes in some 105 universities in the 18 countries are accredited either by their national professional planning institute or by a registration board. But these are in only 7 countries: UK, Australia, Nigeria, Canada, New Zealand, Malaysia and South Africa. The professional planning institutes in the UK, Canada and Australia offer mutual recognition of each other's qualifications, and some extend this to the New Zealand Planning Institute. This enhances the international portability of those qualifications.

The Royal Town Planning Institute has begun to offer to accredit planning programmes outside the UK and Ireland (and Hong Kong), and has given Provisional Accreditation to programmes in Botswana and South Africa.

There are statutory Registration bodies of planners in some countries, and planners in some other countries aspire to achieve that status. Registration bodies are concerned with defining which individuals are competent to practice within that country. This may also entail recognizing qualifications obtained from abroad. They appear to work closely with the local professional planning institutes.

The Commonwealth Architects Association has operated a system of international accreditation for many years, and several, but not all, CAP member institutes would welcome a similar system. However, the costs of operating a system like the CAA's may not be manageable for planners.

In the survey, support for CAP benchmarking of provision of professional planning education was stronger than for accreditation.

Indigenous provision of professional planning training materials is non-existent in most Commonwealth countries.

To move towards capacity-building that is fit for purpose, further analytical work and consultation is now needed, focusing on the content and processes of accreditation and the work of Registration bodies.

THE REPORT

Background

As part of its Programme Grant to CAP for 2009-10, the Commonwealth Foundation supported an Activity entitled “Making Planning Education fit for Purpose”. Subsequently, the Foundation agreed that the activity could be slightly reoriented from the original proposal and that completion could be delayed until the end of February 2011. These minor changes reflected the fact that during 2009-10 CAP had been completing a fuller piece of work for the Commonwealth Secretariat that surveyed planning education across the Commonwealth. That work defined the ground for a more focused use of the Foundation’s grant. The Activity is part of the process of implementing one of the three ComHabitat strategic objectives 2007-11: “To strengthen leadership and governance by Habitat Agenda partners in approaches to sustainable and equitable human settlements development.”

A Concept Paper to the Foundation in January 2010 re-scoped the purpose of the Activity as follows: “to build on the findings from the study funded by the Secretariat by exploring in more depth the scope for CAP to offer a form of benchmarking or accreditation of planning courses in the Commonwealth”. The tasks identified in the Concept paper were: liaison with the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA), and CAP member institutes on the issue of accreditation and the preparation of a Discussion Paper. This is that Discussion Paper.

Introduction

Professionalism is a contested concept. George Bernard Shaw famously described professions as conspiracies against lay persons. Others have seen professionalism as “an occupational strategy... concerned with the maintenance of superior remuneration and status” (Parry and Parry, 1976, 79). Professions also vie with one another to establish monopoly over areas of expertise and employment: an exclusionary not inclusionary endeavour. In addition Elliott (1972) coined the terms "status professions" and "occupational professions" to demarcate the "old" professions (medicine, law and the clergy / university teaching) and the new, often welfare state related professions. These latter can be challenged as being mere ciphers for governments on whom their members largely depend.

This negative view should instead be treated as a critical hypothesis. A counter-proposition is that professions are an important part of civil society, independent repositories of expertise able to challenge power. It is also important to recognise the limits on generalisations. Not all countries have the same traditions of professionalism and not all professions are the same all of the time. There is real value in looking empirically at just what the process of professional formation entails and how it relates to wider civil society. This is especially the case in the Commonwealth. The strong growth of professional

institutions in the UK developed because historically the state was less assertive than was the norm in continental Europe. This meant that Britons aspiring to the gentlemanly status of the old professions had to organise their own training and accreditation. Empire diffused this model, without adapting it adequately to different developmental needs and institutional capacities. Hence support provided through Commonwealth professional organisations and by the Commonwealth Foundation was always likely to be necessary, especially for professions in small states and those with small number of practitioners.

Development of criteria for professional membership is an integral part of building the profession, and typically this is likely to combine some measure of training with accumulation of relevant practical experience. The planning profession historically has been smaller in numbers and less established than the architects, engineers and surveyors amongst the built environment professions. This short study has looked at how and where planners can access the training they require to operate as professionals in the Commonwealth. The research undertaken for the Commonwealth Secretariat (referred to above) has demonstrated widespread shortages of qualified planners especially in countries faced with challenges of rapid urbanisation, the urbanisation of poverty and threats from climate change. This current study now looks at accreditation of planning programmes in more detail than was possible in the work for the Secretariat.

Box 1: Bangladesh

“For the last two decades most of the recruitment to planning jobs in Bangladesh was of civil engineers or architects who practiced town planning as a supplementary qualification. For example, before 2005, any job of ‘Assistant Town Planner’ in a Municipal / City Corporation formally required a ‘BSc in Civil Engineering / Architecture’. This meant that planning graduates from undergraduate planning courses could not apply for such posts. It took several years to amend this requirement to ‘BSc in Civil Engineering / Architecture / Town Planning’. Still today, the planning profession is not well recognised and has to compete with other parallel professions for wider recognition.” Farjana Islam, young Bangladeshi planner.

The context for building the professional capacity of planners in the Commonwealth was set out in the book *Making Planning Work: A guide to approaches and skills* which was endorsed by the Executive-Director of UN-Habitat, developed by CAP, and launched at the 2006 World Urban Forum. This argued that too often the urban planning profession remained too narrowly focused on land use and traditional technical skills, which by themselves would not be sufficient to deliver equitable, inclusive and sustainable human settlements. It argued that “...especially in situations of rapid urbanization and few skilled staff, professionalism has to become more generic. The old professionalism was about excluding outsiders and erecting boundary fences around knowledge and skills.... Professionals need to share their knowledge and skills with each other and with non-professionals with whom and for whom they work” (p.84). Furthermore, it pointed to the need to modernize professional education and to embed opportunities for continuing professional development (e.g. p.85).

Methodology

A very basic questionnaire was constructed so that it could easily and quickly be answered. It was distributed by email to Secretaries of CAP member institutes. It is included as Appendix A. Responses were received from 18 institutes. The list is in Appendix B. Between them these covered institutes in 5 continents, and a mix of large institutes such as those in UK and Canada and small island institutes (e.g. Malta and Mauritius). In addition, material was extracted from the website of the Indian Town Planning Institute (ITPI), and from the Ghana Institute of Planners. A meeting was held with Deborah Bennett at the ACU, and telephone interviews were done with Tony Godwin of CAA and with Selina Goulbourne of the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA). An internet search was done of other Commonwealth professional association websites. In summary, though the research is quite limited, it also covers a large part of the field and usefully complements and supports findings from the work done for the Commonwealth Secretariat. However, only a basic analysis has been done, given the limited resources available.

Main findings

1. There are 3 situations: accreditation by independent professional bodies; statutory registration boards; and countries with neither

Professional **accreditation of planning programmes by an independent professional body** is the exception not the norm. It only happens in large countries with a large and long established professional institute. Thus the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) currently provides full accreditation to programmes in 29 universities. There are 22 planning schools with programmes accredited by the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), while the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) accredits programmes in 16 planning schools. The New Zealand Planning Institute accredits 4 schools. In India 14 institutions are listed as “offering planning education” on the ITPI web site, though it is not clear what this implies.

Nine countries in the survey have a system of **registration boards** set up under national statutes. Such arrangements apply to other professions also. The essence of a regulation board is that it defines who is legally entitled to practice in a particular professional capacity and who is not. In addition it handles discipline cases brought against registered members. This typically involves some approval of locally gained qualifications and may also entail recognizing qualifications obtained from abroad. The Namibia Council for Town and Regional Planners, for example, lists approved planning qualifications from universities in seven countries (only three of them Commonwealth countries).

There may well be close and cordial relations between the registration body and the professional association of planners, with the professional association making input into accreditation by the statutory body. In these situations the profession is heavily involved in setting standards and vetting schools, so although it is not the Institute per se doing the accreditation, the profession is involved in doing it. Thus, the Nigerian

Institute of Town Planners, for example, replied to the questionnaire as “NITP and Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC)” though technically the two are separate bodies. Some 19 planning programmes have accreditation from TOPREC. Similarly, the Malaysian Institute of Planners, works with the Board of Town Planners, Malaysia (see Box 2).

Box 2: The Registration Board and the Professional Institute in Malaysia

BTPM is a body corporate to promote and enhance all aspects related to town and country planning, as well as to regulate and monitor all planning practitioners in this country. The Minister shall appoint members of the Board in each session, normally for a term not exceeding 3 years, or at any time if the Minister feels necessary. BTPM is also in charge of handling all Registered Town Planners, Registered Graduate Town Planners and Temporary Registered Foreign Town Planners from all over the nation, as provided under the Town Planners Act 1995 (Act 538)

Malaysian Institute of Planner (MIP), in the other hand, is an institutional body to encourage the development of art and science in town and country planning for the public interest in Malaysia. The Committee of MIP is elected through the Council Meeting in every two years by the corporate members of MIP, which include both from private and government sectors.

Source: Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation:
<http://www.matrade.gov.my> downloaded 23 March 2011.

A short case study of the situation in South Africa is given in Appendix C. Thanks are due to Martin Lewis, Chief Executive Officer of the South African Council for Planners, for providing the information.

A registration board is less likely than an independent professional institute to promote the profession as such, e.g. by making the case for research. However, some may facilitate training. For example, the Scientific Technical Chamber of Cyprus in cooperation with the several public and private training bodies runs training courses for young graduates covering the Town and Country Planning Law and the Streets and Buildings Regulation Law.

There are some countries where there is no statutory registration of planners, but the status of professions such as architects and engineers is protected. Uganda is an example. In such situations the planners are likely to feel that there are barriers preventing the policy makers from understanding the need for effective planning of human settlements. Other countries in our survey who reported neither a registration board nor an indigenous accreditation system were Brunei, Barbados, Jamaica, Malta, Mauritius and Singapore. Of course there are many Commonwealth countries not covered in the survey where there are too few planners to form an association and no locally accessible planning programmes.

An interview with the CLEA revealed that in some regions, notably the Commonwealth Caribbean, a registration system for lawyers was developed on a regional basis.

2. Some reciprocal arrangements operate

Reciprocal arrangements mean that countries “recognise” the professional equivalence of planning qualifications obtained in some other countries, but do not directly accredit those programmes themselves. Thus CIP/ICU has such reciprocal arrangements with RTPI and PIA (and with the professional body in the USA), and have had approaches for similar arrangements with NZ, South Africa (and also Ireland). In turn the RTPI offers a special arrangement for full members (not student members) of the CIP/ICU, PIA and NZPI, requiring them only to successfully complete a course in UK Planning Law and Practice to qualify for full RTPI membership. However, RTPI also offers “Associate membership” which is open to persons whose initial planning education was overseas. It is also possible then to progress from Associate to full membership. As for PIA, it has reciprocal arrangements with CIP/ICU and with NZPI (though RTPI is not listed on the PIA website). PIA welcomes applications for full membership from planners with other qualifications, but they need to demonstrate a working knowledge of Australian planning law and systems, and to have their qualifications approved as equivalent to Australian standards. This latter assessment is left to Australia’s vocational education and training assessment agency.

3. Things are stirring: a) International accreditation

The RTPI conducted a wide ranging review of its educational policies at the start of the new Millennium. Amongst the observations in the report (RTPI, 2003, 15-6) was: “RTPI input is sought for benchmarking exercises; and there is some interest in how we might support or accredit 'international' qualifications. The issues for the RTPI thus relate to both the scope of planning education - its relevance to a changing world, and how far it can be the basis of a 'portable' qualification - and also what it can or should contribute to international capacity building in planning.”

Since then RTPI has awarded Provisional Accreditation to programmes in two Commonwealth countries outside UK – at University of Botswana and at University of Cape Town. RTPI accreditation boards are expected to visit both schools in 2012 to assess the case for Full Accreditation. Other South African universities are in dialogue with the RTPI about possible accreditation.

4. Things are stirring: b) Some major reviews

Reference has already been made to the RTPI’s Education Commission (RTPI, 2003). It produced a number of important changes, notably reducing the minimum period of post-graduate courses from 2 academic year full-time (3 year part-time) to 12 months full-time (24 months part-time).

The CIP/ICU has been undertaking its first major review of accreditation since the mid-1980s (CIP/ICU, 2010). This sits as part of “Planning for the Future”, a wider

initiative of CIP-ICU and its affiliate Province-level organizations of professional planners. “The mandate of the project is to ‘raise the bar’ for the professions’ standards, and to continue to meet expectations of constituents. The vision is to develop professional standards at a national level which are consistently and uniformly applied through a transparent process which is subject to regular review and which advances the credibility of the Canadian planning profession nationally and internationally” (p.6).

In comparison with the RTPI review the focus is more procedural and less substantive. In developing CIP-ICU practices it draws upon the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada’s Guidelines for Good Practice of Academic Accreditation of Professional Programs (see www.aaac.ca/PDFs/GoodPracticeGuidelines.pdf). However, some substantive changes are also proposed, notably a stronger emphasis on critical thinking, leadership and interpersonal skills. Unlike the RTPI, the Canadians have basically stuck with a 2 year full-time minimum for a post-graduate course, though there appears to be scope for a one year Master’s programme provided its is backed by at least 2 years of planning practice experience.

PIA also published a major review of planning education in 2008 (Gurran, Norman and Gleeson, 2008). It also noted that new skills, new knowledge and new processes or systems are likely to be required. While the authors recognized “emerging concern about a perceived United States and United Kingdom hegemony of planning educational approaches” (p.18), the non-Australian planning education systems they reviewed were those in the USA, UK, New Zealand and Hong Kong. The report made a number of recommendations including a call for a review of PIA accreditation arrangements. The PIA then produced a draft amendment to their education policy in late 2009, though the precise nature of the changes is not highlighted. In addition, “The National Education Committee of the Planning Institute of Australia has in recent months discussed the issue of accreditation courses for overseas trained planners in response to a proposal by a private sector training organisation to provide such a course. However, no conclusions have been reached and at this stage there is no commitment for this to occur” (response to questionnaire).

The NZPI also undertook a review during 2008-09. The resulting policy (New Zealand Planning Institute, 2009) makes clear that courses must be of 4 years full-time duration at undergraduate level or 2 years full-time at Masters. This directly contrasts with the RTPI formula of 3 years Bachelor plus a further post-graduate year for the undergraduate route or 12 months minimum for post-graduates.

5. CAP Accreditation? A mixed response

The idea that CAP could and should offer some form of accreditation of planning programmes has often been aired in CAP meetings. The call is particularly likely to come from those involved in such programmes where there is only one university in the country and no indigenous accreditation system. The fact that the CAA has

operated a system of accreditation for many years shows that it can be done. Crucially, the CAA specifications demonstrate awareness of the diversity that exists within the Commonwealth, arguing that “globally relevant skills and understanding can be learned in the context of locally domain specific knowledge” (Commonwealth Association of Architects, 2008, 2). Box 3 summarises the key features of the long-established CAA system.

Box 3: The CAA system of international accreditation

Since 1968 the CAA has published lists of qualifications that it considers, after inspection, to be a sufficient standard to recommend for recognition by national authorities as meeting the academic requirements “appropriate for registration, accreditation or acceptance as an architect” (CAA 2008, 1). By helping CAA member institutes and registration boards to maintain their own lists, this system is seen as assisting the free movement of architects and students.

The CAA has two strands to its system:

- It validates national systems operated by CAA members. Hence architecture programmes accredited by those national bodies are automatically accredited by CAA also;
- It validates programmes in architecture schools in countries where the national system has not been CAA validated or is non-existent.

The CAA’s own validation procedures and documentation requirements provide a benchmark against which national systems can themselves be considered. The actual work of looking at programmes or systems involves visiting the countries concerned. This work is done by specially assembled Visiting Boards, drawn from a Panel of experts nominated by member institutes. The Visiting Boards comprise a mix of in-region but out-of-country representatives, in-country representatives and out-of-region representatives. The travel and subsistence costs of a visit are met by the national CAA member institute, though “such costs may be shared with other bodies such as the registration authority, educational institute or national government” (CAA, 2008, 5). However, the costs are rising, and if the indirect costs of CAA staff time are included in calculations then it further funding will need to be sought, for example through charging a fee for the validation visit.

The questionnaire asked what respondents thought the view of their own professional planning body might be “If CAP were to develop a form of international accreditation and offer it to planning schools across the Commonwealth”? Responses can only be indicative and preliminary, as none of the respondents had an opportunity to canvas opinion from their elected Council members. Nevertheless the responses were interesting. Eight of the 18 who replied viewed the prospect positively. However, three other institutes said they would be opposed. Two of these were cases where there was a statutory registration system, and the view was put that a CAP international accreditation could be seen as duplicating, if not competing with that. In the third case, a small island institute simply felt it was unnecessary as they could

recruit staff with internationally portable planning qualifications. The other four institutes were undecided at this stage and on the basis of the very limited information about what a CAP system might look like.

6. CAP Benchmarking would be welcomed

A further question asked about “in principle” attitudes towards a system of international benchmarking of courses by CAP. While again there were a few “don’t knows”, a clear majority (11 out of the 18) would welcome this.

The interview with the CLEA revealed that CLEA does not provide any benchmarking to its members, but does provide curriculum materials that can be provided support and/or be customised to fit local situations. This is another avenue that could be explored by CAP.

7. Limited provision of training materials

A question was also asked about whether the CAP member institute provided any training materials, either at initial professional education level or as part of continuing professional development. Seven replied in the affirmative, but 11 said they had no materials. As might be expected, the smaller institutes generally do not have materials.

Conclusions and further action

This short survey has complemented the findings in the longer piece of research that was done for the Commonwealth Secretariat. It has confirmed the dominant role played by a few big institutes in professional accreditation of planning programmes in the Commonwealth. Registration councils have been created by statute in several countries and play an important role. Planning institutes in some other countries aspire to see the creation of such boards. There is a vacuum in terms of indigenous professional accreditation in most of the smaller countries.

There would certainly be interest in some countries (again mainly smaller ones) in the development of a CAP system of accreditation, and the CAA has operated a similar system with respect of architecture for a long time. However, any such system would need to respect the diversity of the Commonwealth and recognize that some countries feel no need for such a system. Also there must be doubts about how it could be funded.

CAP support through benchmarking of the quality of professional planning programmes would be widely welcomed. Meanwhile most countries covered in the survey do not have training materials locally prepared and targeted at planners, whether when they are gaining a first qualification or for use in supporting mid-career professional development. The work of the CLEA on developing curricula and teaching materials for legal studies programmes would be worth looking at.

We need to remember that the respondents to the questionnaire were arguably the most vibrant and effective professional planning bodies in the Commonwealth. Many countries simply have no professional body for planning, and no indigenous training for planners.

In others the development of the profession is dependent on the spare time efforts of a few volunteers from amongst what is often a small membership. As a generalization, the problems are most acute in countries where the rate of urbanization is high and there is vulnerability to natural hazards.

With the time and resources available it has not been possible to probe more qualitative aspects of how the accreditation systems and registration boards work. However, the survey has succeeded in gathering some of the essential information to carry out such analysis. From that, and a fuller probing of the CAA experience, it might be possible to develop ideas about what a CAP approach to accreditation or benchmarking might look like and whether such endeavours could be resourced. Given the challenges set out in ComHabitat's (2010) work on scoping the state of the Commonwealth's cities, and the line of argument developed in *Making Planning Work*, the present system across most of the Commonwealth is not delivering the necessary capacity for planning.

It is recommended that:

- Further work is done to explore the content of the systems operated by the professional associations and by the registration councils, to explore how consistent they are one with another, and how well they address the concerns of “re-inventing planning”;
- CAP should explore what a benchmarking system might look like, and consult on its findings with its members and with Commonwealth planning schools;
- CAP should only consider what a CAP system of accreditation might look like once the merits and viability of a benchmarking system have been fully assessed;
- Discussions should be held by CAP with CLEA to explore possible co-operation on teaching materials for planning and environmental law;
- CAP should try to reach out to the Commonwealth planning schools, strengthening links with them, and raising their awareness of the Commonwealth dimension of planning education.

References

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Appendix A: The questionnaire.



Commonwealth Association of Planners

Name of Professional Body:			
Web site of the Professional Body:			
Name and email of person completing the questionnaire:			
1. Does your professional body operate a system for the professional accreditation of planning education? If the answer is “no” please go to Question 7.	Yes	No	
2. If you do accredit and the relevant documents explaining the requirements and procedures are available on-line, please give details in the box on the right to show where these can be found on the internet. If you accredit but documents are not on the internet, please send / fax a copy. Thanks.			
3. How many planning schools currently offer planning programmes that are fully accredited by your body?			
4. Is a full list of the programmes you accredit available on your website? If not, can you please send / fax a list?	Yes	No	
5. Do you accredit planning programmes outside your home country?	Yes	Yes in principle, but no actual ones.	No
6. If any planning programmes outside your own country are currently actively seeking your accreditation, please list them in the box on the right.			
7. Does your country have a statutory registration system for planners that defines who is eligible to practice as a planner? If your answer is “No”	Yes	No	

please go to Question 9.			
8. If there is a statutory registration system, and the details of its operation can be accessed on the internet, please provide the relevant web address. If there is no web site, can you please send / fax the details of the system? Thanks.			
9. If CAP were to develop a form of international accreditation and offer it to planning schools across the Commonwealth do you think your own professional planning body would: N.B. Answers to this question and question 10 are not seen as committing your professional planning body to supporting or opposing any CAP system, should one be developed eventually.	In principle welcome this	Have no strong views either way	In principle be opposed to the idea
10. Another alternative might be a CAP-operated cross-Commonwealth system of benchmarking. In this, CAP might, if invited by the planning school or by the national CAP member institute, provide an “international” member to be part of an accreditation board from the “local” professional planning institute. Do you think your own professional planning body would:	In principle welcome this	Have no strong views either way	In principle be opposed to the idea
11. Does your professional planning body currently have any materials for use in initial professional education and/or as continuing professional development that it might be possible to share with other CAP member institutes? If your answer is “yes” please briefly indicate the topics covered.	Yes		No
Please add any comments you wish to make:			

Thank you. Please return to Cliff Hague at thehagues@blueyonder.co.uk.

Appendix B: List of CAP members who completed the questionnaire

Planning Institute of Australia
Barbados Town and Country Planning Society
Department of Town and Country Planning Brunei
Canadian Institute of Planners / Institut Canadien des Urbanistes
Cyprus Association of Town Planners
Jamaican Institute of Planners
Malaysian Institute of Planners
Malta Chamber of Planners
Town Planning Association of Mauritius
Namibia Council for Town and Regional Planners
New Zealand Planning Institute
Nigerian Institute of Town Planners and Town Planning Registration Council of Nigeria
Royal Town Planning Institute
Singapore Institute of Planners
South African Planning Institute
Tanzania Association of Planners
Trinidad and Tobago Society of Planners
Uganda Institute of Physical Planners

APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE OF A REGISTRATION COUNCIL – THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR PLANNERS.

The South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN) is a statutory body set up in terms of the Planning Profession Act, 2002 (Act 36 of 2002) an Act of Parliament. The Act is situated under the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (previously the Department of Land Affairs) a National Department.

The preamble of the Act states the purpose of the Act being:

“To provide for the establishment of the South African Council of Planners as a juristic person; to provide for different categories of planners and the registration of planners; to authorise the identification of areas of work for planners; to recognise certain voluntary associations; to protect the public from unethical planning practices; to maintain a high standard of professional conduct and integrity; to establish disciplinary mechanisms and an Appeal Board: and to provide for incidental matter.”

The South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN) is thus the Statutory Body for Planning (Town / Urban and Regional Planning) within South Africa. There are currently two voluntary associations recognised by SACPLAN: the S.African Planning Institute and SAACPP (South African Association of Consulting Professional Planners).

The SACPLAN’s mission is to profile the planning profession in South Africa to world class standards through:

- Regulating the Planning Profession so as to promote and protect the interests of the public in relation to Planning;
- Increasing the numbers of registered planners and increasing representivity in the planning profession;
- Inculcating discipline and ethical principles;
- Ensuring and promoting a high standard of education and training in the Planning sector;
- Protecting and promoting the interests of registered planning professionals;
- Promoting good planning practice informed by ethos, values and spirit of social justice, poverty eradication, spatial equity, environmental sustainability;
- Promoting social and Environmental justice by continuously transforming the spatial form in order to realise equitable distribution of resources; and
- Promoting innovative planning techniques in order to advance both rural and urban development.

Values

SACPLAN strives to pursue excellence and professionalism in line with the Batho Pele principles with an emphasis on:

- Integrity and honesty;
- Responsiveness;
- Transparency;
- Accountability; and

- Innovation.

SACPLAN'S Mandate

SACPLAN is inter alia mandated by the Planning Profession Act, No 36 of 2002 to fulfil the following functions:

- Registration of persons and prescribing the guidelines governing application for registration and the qualifications necessary for such application and maintenance of a register,
- Accredit planning schools, and determine a framework for the provision of continuing education and training,
- Making of rules and regulations which amongst others include the identification of planning profession work and determination of application fees, and registration,
- Maintaining high standard of professional conduct and integrity through the prescription and enforcement of rules and code of conduct,
- Protect the public from unethical planning practices,
- Transforming the planning profession to ensure its legitimacy and effectiveness.

Regarding the Constitution of the Council, Section 4(1) of the Act prescribes the representivity / membership of the Council. The members are then appointed by the Minister after a call for nominations from all interested persons, voluntary associations, institutions and organisations to submit nominations.

In terms of Section 4(1) the Council is to consist of the following members:

- Two planners in full-time employ of the Department;
- One planner in the employ of provincial Government
- Two planners in the employ of the municipal sphere of government, one of whom shall be from a municipality which is mainly rural in character and the other from a municipality which is mainly urban in character;
- Three planners from the planning education and training sector;
- No more than three but at least one person to represent the interest of communities who are or may be affected by planning decisions; and
- Three planners in private practice.

Taken the above, as well as the process to be followed by the Minister, the membership / representation on the Council will include a member(s) of voluntary associations such as SAPI and SAACPP. Also under the category "*Three planners from private practice*" this could include member(s) of voluntary associations. (It is often the case that the members of the Council are also members of the voluntary associations). The Vice President of SAPI as well as the Chairperson of SAACPP are currently both members of the SACPLAN Council.

There are a number of sub-committees of Council. The Act then also specifically prescribes the establishment of an Education and Training Committee. The Education and Training Committee deals inter alia with accreditation issues. The Education and

Training Committee consists of the three planners appointed in terms of the Act from the planning education and training sector, two additional members of Council, a representative from the Committee of Heads of Planning Schools, as well as the Chairperson of the Council.

The Education and Training Committee deals extensively with matters relating to the competencies of planners, types of qualifications offered, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Continuous Professional Development (CPD), setting on standards, etc.

Sections 8(4)(b) and (c) of the Planning Professions Act, 2002 (Act 36 of 2002), state that SACPLAN

- “(b) ... must conduct accreditation visits to any educational institution which has a department, school or faculty of planning, at least once in five years, ...:*
- (c) may grant, conditionally grant, refuse or withdraw the accreditation of educational programmes with regards to planning:”*

An Accreditation Committee (Accreditation School Visiting Committee) in an extended committee and is made up of representation that includes (but is not limited to) members of the Education and Training Committee, a senior academic staff from another university, member(s) of one of the voluntary association (such as SAPI or SAACPP), a planner representing an employer body (normally public sectors (local or municipal government), and a Consulting Planner. Accreditation visits are conducted in 5 year cycles.

Accreditation of academic qualifications in South Africa is overseen by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) and the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). As such all academic programmes are evaluated against a framework of criteria set up by the HEQC. As indicated above in the case of the SACPLAN, it (SACPLAN) has further been mandated by the Planning Profession Act, 2002 to conduct accreditation visits.

SACPLAN then inter alia uses the 19 criteria from the HEQC criteria, as well as the alignment of programmes offered to the qualifications submitted to (and approved by) the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in respect of the stated outcomes. The SACPLAN is further currently engaged with a process of looking at the standards and Competencies of the Planning Profession, which will feed into a number of other programme and projects such as RPL and CPD. The voluntary associations (such as SAPI, SAACPP and Heads of Planning Schools) and a number of National Government Departments are/will be involved in the afore-mentioned process.

Nine of the 11 Planning Schools (Universities and Universities of Technology) have undergone accreditation visits over the last three years. The remaining two Planning Schools will be visited during 2011.